



**Did an
Xbox
addiction
lead to
tragedy?**
P.50



**SEX AND THE
NATIONAL
BALLET** P.62



**Does
Harper
have a
future?**
P.18

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THIS WEEK

Interview

18 | THE WAY TO GO

Victor Julian Barnes talks to Kenneth Whyte about his activism and sends his parents and what makes for a best death

Columns

11 | CAPITAL CLARY

Michael Raphael on an HP's quick-thinking grandson and the lack of congressional calls on election night

14 | ANDREW COYNE

The fate of the nation does not rest on the fact that the government will soon return to a deficit—the worry is that it could prove habit-forming

15 | PAUL WILKE

Stephen King wrote that all monsters could be divided into three archetypes, which come in handy when considering Paul Martin.

National

16 | RIGHT MAN FOR THE JOB

Stephen Harper is the right character for the prime says a skeptic, but is he up for playing the parts that could finally weaken a majority?

21 | A LONG WINTER

The ski industry is in trouble, and fewer skiers is not the only problem. Why the B.C. government might soon be in the ski resort business

22 | BAH-BAH-BAH

Regina opens its first urban safari reserve: why does 1 Canadian lenders have huge keno, Obama-esque rallies?

World

24 | RUSSIA'S SILVER LINING

The global financial crisis is bad news for everyone, but Russia could use the melt-down to expand its influence with neighbours and others

26 | A WIDOW'S LAMENT

Umm Hani's first husband was mistaken for Jesus and killed by Shi'ite militia during sectarian killings in Baghdad

MACLEAN'S

VOLUME 12 NUMBER 46, NOVEMBER 10, 2008 • SINCE 1962

2 From the Editors • 6 Mail Bag
17 Seven Days

NOVEMBER 10-17, 2008



The Crap Family want their son and brother Brandon home safe

THE BACK PAGES

52 | Stage

Karen Kahn's provocative turn as the artistic director of the National Ballet of Canada

53 | Books

In Helen Humphreys' novels, less is more

56 | Film

Robert De Niro's showbiz satire: What Just Happened?

57 | Recipe

Drying racks make a comeback

58 | Travel

Drinking and smoke-chasing don't mix

59 | Help

Infant bereavement photography helps grieving parents

71 | Franchise

How to be more undecided than any undecided voter

72 | The Kid

Nelson Pridemore's Symonds: 1833-2008

on the cover: A little listens to your sandwich?

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WWW.MACLEANS.CA

World (continued)

29 | HOW YOU SEE US

A former child slave successfully resists Niger. Canada's foreign-aid strategy plan was a surprise in Afghanistan: organ donor reform in China

Business

30 | COVER STORY

FOOD SAFETY

The public was shocked by the Maple Leaf outbreak, but more rigorous testing still might not prevent future incidents. Michael Pirozynski tells you why.

43 | STEVE MAICH

China says its economy is just fine, thanks. Tell that to the more than 87,000 small and mid-sized companies that have gone out of business

44 | KILLER MARKETING

The fight over a B.C. ghost town who warns make us want to smoke: Canadian house prices are shaping

Environment

47 | ECO-INNOVATION

The chemical industry is moving toward greener technologies, not only due to public pressure, but also to improve its bottom line

Society

50 | JUST A GAME?

Critics on whether to allow games like to blame for the mysterious disappearance of 18-year-old Romanian Crisp

Technology

51 | REDOOT YOUR BODY

The trio in a three-part series of visionary, advanced researchers working with stem cells have made mind-bending progress

Justice

58 | WAS SHE THE BAUT?

A woman infected with HIV by a man known to police and Public Health is claiming they knew she was at risk

Moviemakers

59 | GIRL BEHIND THE MASK

Kim St-Thomé plays in net for the Habs. Anne Hathaway's very bad date: Mia Kravner's new book on the lives of refugees around the world

Vote night

Get full election-night coverage from Wells, Savage, Coyne and Peschke at macleans.ca/mv4

Until then, test your knowledge with our skill-testing U.S. Election '06 quiz. macleans.ca/usaquiz



BLOG CENTRAL



ANDREW COYNE
"A Green Shift that promised to make the whole country richer—as an investment in higher productivity—might well have proved popular, and might yet in time."
macleans.ca/coyne



MICHAEL WELLS
"Michael Ignatieff has made a strong showing of things, since he got elected. Lately I picture him walking around everyone's ship saying 'DID YOU HEAR? I GOT Elected WITHOUT AN ACCIDENT!'"
macleans.ca/wells



SARAH SAVAGE
"I am relieved to know that it takes that level of stupidity to look as good as Sarah Palin has day in and day out on the campaign trail."
macleans.ca/savage



THE COMMONS
"It is the responsibility of our leaders to please us or lead us? Are we so lucrally cynical at this point that we refuse to invest the trust necessary to be led?"
macleans.ca/smith

SEABED: COMMENT OF THE WEEK
"Reck. We've had it easy compared to pretty much anyone of my generation on any corner of the globe."—James on The Hill

WEB POLL RESULTS

Since the market meltdown began, how often have you checked the value of your retirement savings?

Not at all. Why would I want to put myself through that?



BOOK EXCERPT



Shining a light
Read an exclusive excerpt from Kerry Diken's new book, *Dark Days: The story of four Canadians tortured in the name of fighting terror* (macleans.ca/darkdays)



We're No. 2!
What happens to all of the championship hats and shorts made for the team that isn't? What happens to the winner of gold, surprise you?
macleans.ca/weareno2

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'I think we know who'd win in a cage match; Dion's athletic but Harper's a scrapper'

A FIGHT TO THE END

PAUL WELLS's breakdown of the election in your Special Edition was absolutely riveting ("What happened," Election Special, Oct. 12). Sapper went by the boards because I couldn't put it down. The fit is so much detail it will take more than one read to get through it all. Fascinating.

Les Irvine, Ottawa, B.C.

NORMALLY, I read my *Maclean's* cover to cover and was looking forward to the issue that came out after the election thinking there would be something new and refreshing to read now that it's all over. But, alas—no! The entire issue was devoted to the election. Come on, people, this horse is dead.

Joyce Jeanes, Nanaimo, B.C.

I'VE NEVER had such fun reading non-fiction as I did with "What happened!" It was a real page-turner. Then I started to think—well—it must be fiction. What country is it right now would elect a leader this way, with such thug-like bling and bullying and makeovers and hair? Judy McNeill, Etobicoke, Ont.

READING ABOUT Dion fighting to prove his leadership qualities while watching an athlete fighting match on TV led to an interesting dream—can you tag Harper's Dion cage match? I think we all know who would win that one. Dion may be more athletic, but Harper's a scrapper.

Carole Powers, Toronto

LOOKING FOR A FIX

ANDREW COYNE is correct: our electoral system is broken ("What if they gave us elections and redistricting?" Election Special, Oct. 12). He writes, "We are trying to run five-party politics through a system that was designed for two parties." The culprit is this failure of democracy: the voting system that we call first past the post, a system that no new democracy in the world has implemented in the last 600 years. Considerable ample merit the single transferable vote system, which would provide proportional representation and therefore not require the need to merge parties, let the vote merge on the ballot, avoid strategic voting and vote swapping, and select a truly representative candidate with over 50 per cent support in each riding.

Tom Maskey, Burnaby, Ont.

ANDREW COYNE LAMENTES the fact that for the third election in a row Canadians have elected another minority Parliament and that, because of this, our democracy is in crisis. One admission: those supposedly meh election results are the fault of our voters: take all election systems "Where build? On the contrary, the system works well and Canada has suffered very well as a nation because of it. We've had similar electoral results here in 1942, '51 and '55, we had three successive minority Parliaments, all consisting of four political parties. Eventually the system corrected itself, and in the next series of elec-



tions. From 1942 to 2000, Canadians elected majority Parliaments eight out of 30 times. What's the alternative? "Proportional representation?" If people think our present system is broken, wait till they see the dog's breakfast we would have with that kind of electoral system. Minority Parliaments would become a constant fact of life. Just look at those other countries that have "banned" themselves with that wacky system, stable, full-term parliaments are a rarity. I'll take our present system any day over the present and unstable representation situation that would be created if we tried to move toward a proportional representation system.

Joe Kadis, Winnipeg

THE CURRENT DILEMMA of our electoral system is a quintessence of the left. One solution would be to follow the Conservative approach to this problem, by uniting centre

left and left wing parties. It is possible that a well thought-out environmental policy, with clear indications of the costs vs. net gains, economically speaking, might make a union with the Liberals attractive to many Green party supporters.

Geoff M. Milnes, Deep River, Ont.

ANDREW COYNE is even more correct than he knows when he writes that this election was not a victory for the Tories. It wasn't a victory for anyone. Much is being made of the "effectiveness" of the Tory campaign. Indeed, if we are looking at the outcomes as the Tory seat count and popular vote percentage, the 2008 campaign could certainly be said to have been effective. However, these gains (especially the one per cent gain in the popular vote) are rather less impressive when one considers that this election registered the lowest vote count in Canadian history. According to *Electoral Canada*, the Conservative party took 17.6 per cent of the 13.8 million ballot cast in the recent election—for a grand total of 5.2 million votes. Two years ago, in the 2006 election, the Conservatives took only 16.3 per cent of the popular vote, but with over 14.8 million ballot cast, that resulted in a total of nearly 5.4 million votes, or nearly 100,000 more votes than in 2008. This means that the Conservatives actually lost nearly 100,000 votes between this election and the last. And we call this one effective campaign?

Grisham Artyuk, Kingston, Ont.

HARPER'S INFLUENCE

IF FUNDAMENTALLY, Stephen Harper's wife, Laureen, is an amazing Mitchell "Magdalen" General Deputy (Oct. 12) on the "Bad mothers" list, her body has been exposed to during the election campaign. Red often comes like Rick Mercer, for walking, and the other political leaders, who, when asked to say something complimentary about the person on their left, punctuated their comments with a sarcastic jab, while their father did not. I guess then that this means the person employed by their father while doing his job are okay "being [being fired] election and then calling as a lobbyist before the election" anyone saying he'd never be innocent again and then saying (hears), usually avoiding the promotion of the opposition when they ask legitimate questions about possible

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COULLARD missed the plane, says a reader.

about of Taliban prisoners in the hands of Afghan authorities ("You support the Taliban more than you do our troops"), intrusive gutter responses to my various policy questions ("The Green Shift will scare Canadians"), listing other committed Canadians because it is politically expedient to do so (claiming that seeking democracy for Ronald Allen Smith, on death row in the U.S., would "lead the wrong message") While I do not have children, I certainly know that I would not use the example for my children that the Prime Minister acts for his *Sophomore* kids, Ottawa

GROW UP!

I HAVEN'T BEEN hit as often as I was by the story on the financial system for determining when is the right time for a woman to have a child ("At what stage should I get pregnant?" *Help*, Oct. 26). It wasn't simply the odd obscurity and absurdity of this approach, but most of all it was the cordily self-absorbed attitudes of the women interviewed. It is so easily typical of the desire for instant gratification pervading current thinking and my evening news commented that the wouldn't mind having the companionship of adult children, but would prefer

to skip the process of getting to that point, a nice all-in-one deal "at birth and cry." This points out the stark simplicity of the answer as to when the time is right: when they are genuinely able to put the needs of another human being ahead of their own and to take responsibility for another person's life. In other words, when they grow up. And that looks to be a long time coming.

Maggie Meenan, Ottawa

TERMS OF ENDEARMENT

IN HER INTERVIEW about her relationship with MP Martin Brezina, Julie Coulillard revealed that Brezina was at least honest if not moral (Interview, Oct. 26). When, as Coulillard admitted, Brezina asked her to date him, but only on certain conditions, he was surely making it clear that his career came before their relationship. Coulillard accuses her own conduct by saying that the conditions would be those of any politician. No incidents and moral politicians would consider such an arrangement. Coulillard just didn't clue in.

Jonathan Miller, Toronto

A BEASTLY DEBATE

IT WAS WITHIN great moment that I read your review of Randall Hansen's new book, *Fire and Fury*, about the Allied bombing campaign in the Second World War ("Are we beasts?" asked Churchill," *Books*, Oct. 27). The achievements of the Canadians in this campaign are nothing short of miraculous. Those men flew into the sunset with primitive radar and navigational aids, crossing hundreds of miles over the dark, only to be attacked by night fighters, searchlights and deadly flak. Although the merits of area bombing are questionable, there is no question that valuable resources were used by the Germans that could have been used against us in Normandy. The 100,000 Canadian volunteers had the highest casualty rate of all our armed forces, with 10,000 killed. I recently visited the Norman Lancaster Society at the Museum in Norman, Alta. It was a moving experience to look at all the names of those killed, including my great uncle. *Last we fought*.

Richard J. Mack, Edmonton

IT SEEMS THAT the morality of the bombing of Nazi Germany has become an issue that morally, ethically, politically, and even emotionally like me upsets audiences. Historical judgments, like so much of life, is also an exercise, opinions, politics, etc., all of which are dependent on time, place and the eye of the beholder. Whose judgment is sound? That of Member Hansmann as a politician with limited resources to do all in his

power to achieve the military objectives? To win the war against Hitler? Or do we go with Hansen and other historians, who saw it as a very clear decision to use whatever accounts of the actions of these persons who saved our lives and our freedom? I find it especially effective that some of those Hansen's critics were long here to defend their actions and separations. All bombing of Germany contributed to the Allied victory. To assert otherwise with romantic history is divisive and harmful.

Jim McQueen, Ottawa

THE HAMBURG AND DRESDEN firestorms, the atomic bombs, the Holocaust, the rape of Nanking—all are proof that we can tragically answer "yes" to Churchill's question "Are we beasts?" The fact is that we do have this

MACLEAN'S BESTSELLERS

(COMPILED BY DEAN BETHUNE)

Fiction	
1 THE PRIVATE PATIENT By J.D. Salinger	2,031
2 A HOT WANTED MAN By John Le Carré	1,144
3 THROUGH BLACK SPRUCE By Joseph Boyden	1,000
4 COVENTRY By Helen Humphreys	808
5 ALL THE COLOURS OF DARKNESS By Chinua Achebe	819
6 THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO By Stieg Larsson	610
7 THE FLYING TROUSERS By M.C. Escher	500
8 THE SILENCE OF EDGAR SAWYER By David Mitchell	400
9 DEATH WITH INTERRUPTIONS By Alan Satterwhite	170
10 RED DOGS, RED DOGS By Peter Cooley	141

Non-fiction

1 A FAIR COUNTRY By John Wilson	1,031
2 THE SNOWBALL By Alice Broderick	1,041
3 HOS, PLAT AND CROWD By Thomas Friedman	1,011
4 THE POSTRUL CANADIENS By Eric Joynt	1,011
5 CHAMPLAIN'S DREAM By David Mackenzie	79
6 THE LAST LECTURE By Wendy Prusich	5,071
7 THE GIFT OF THINGS By Margaret Atwood	2,100
8 FIRE AND FURY By Randall Hansen	93
9 HELL OR HIGH WATER By Paul Martin	83
10 LOVE'S CIVIL WAR By Walter A. Danks	79

LAST WEEK (OCTOBER 12, 2010)



"WHOSE JUDGMENT IS more sound?" Veterans or historians?

beastly component in our human anatomy, and war gives both cause and opportunity for it to burst forth.

Frank Gue, Burlington, Ont.

IN THE PAST few years, I have been listening to see if there's any Day attendance at local war memorials or veterans' meetings to those who take the time from their busy lives to honour our war heroes, but once there, they may be cause of the corner

protocol. Perhaps those tips will help. 1) There are no anti-war protests during the service when all emotions will be flowing their proper respects by removing their hats, Tilley Endorables, berets and other assorted caps. 2) If you are unsure of when to do so, follow the lead of those in the Canadian forces. If you are so unsure that having an uncovered head is inappropriate, then you should probably be home in bed. 3) Have all cellphone conversations and text messaging for later; they will keep. 4) During the service it would be better

you keep coffee and other drinks. Surely you can make it through the ceremony, knowing that as soon as it comes to a close you may regret it in the early, late bar or saloon of your choice. At that time you may wish to serve a veteran, and if you are very lucky, he might even share a story or two. 4) Young love is wonderful, but this ceremony is a chance for the first or last place for groping, fondling or peeing. 5) If after this you are still unsure of how to

behave, and you do not wish to embarrass your mother (who really did do her best), ask yourself, "Would I act this way at a funeral?" Remember: this is a memorial service to honour those whose sacrifices are unfathomable by anyone lucky enough not to have experienced the horror of war first-hand. Catherine Jones, Halifax

IN PASSING

Charles Debes, 85, of Paris, a former member of the Order of the British Empire, was famous in the late 1950s for his contribution of equity into the use of bonded substances in sport. Sparked by the Ben Johnson case, it revealed the breadth of performance drugs in organized sport. He served as chief justice between 1990 and 1996.

Ray Hillebrand, 84, is a writer best known as a mystery novelist who in his tales among the Navajo Indians of the U.S. Southwest, he penned bestsellers such as *Shawshank*, *Glacier Park* and *The Great Escape*. For the authenticity of his books, he lived in Indian territory, the Navajo Nation, and in the Indian Reservation of the Navajo in 1987.

PURE WHITE

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A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF JENNIFER HUDSON

On Friday, the brother and brother of the 25-year-old Oscar winner were found brutally murdered in the family's Chicago home. The seven-year-old nephew, Julian, was reportedly missing. An FBI search ensued, along with an outpouring of public support, including a visitation from Barack Obama. On Sunday, she offered a \$100,000 reward for Julian's return. On Monday, a boy was found in an abandoned SUV, dead from multiple gunshot wounds. He was identified as her nephew's body.

Good news

Murder by numbers

Staines seems to be suffering through another episode of random murder, the latest being Ricky Zavada, who was shot last week while smoking outside a bar. But the bigger picture is much more positive than the daily news might suggest. According to Statistics Canada, the number of murders fell for the second straight year and the rate continues on a two-decade-long trend downward. Even better is the evidence on spousal homicide. Since 1977, the rate of women murdered by their partners has fallen by more than half. Men have seen a similar drop, although they remain far less likely to be killed by a spouse. All of which suggests public effort is not just paying to reduce family violence, *now* but *paying off*.

Freedom relies

The requirements of 1563/1670 awarded by a West African master to Hodgkinson Mann, a woman who was sold into slavery at the age of 12 and laboured for 18 years for a physically and socially abusive "master," are small comfort, but the court's decision to bind the Niger government responsible for failing to protect Mann from slavery, only criminalised in 2003, sets a powerful precedent in the region and could provide a desperately needed incentive for the estimated 4,000 slaves still held in Niger. Before now, a local human rights group says the government's slavery law had amounted to nothing more than a "chimeric offence" to appease critics. *Waters*

Hallowed halls

Being stranded on a gurney in a hospital hallway surely grinds to most of us, but a new study presented this week to the American College of Emergency Physicians

in Chicago suggests that "hall way medicine" may actually be a good idea. According to the study, as emergency rooms get filled with patients awaiting admission, the ER becomes a holding tank instead of a clinic. By moving patients into the hallways of other hospital floors, the ER is better able to treat seriously ill patients. The result is fewer deaths and better care. So next time you get wheeled into some random hallway, don't grudge to the sidekick. They're really there.

Bad news

Washed out

Outside of naming Wile E. Coyote as special adviser on Roadrunner relations, it would've been hard for the United Nations to make a more confrontational move than last week's appointment of Canadian environmental activist Maude Barlow as special adviser on water issues. The former anti-free trade crusader has retweeted her message in recent years to warn of impending doom if market forces are allowed to dictate water usage. To Barlow,

Gordon Campbell, and calls by every First Nations group with a fax machine for his removal as chancellor of McGill University, are gross overkill. His words were poorly chosen, but he meant no harm. He apologized, move on.

A hollow gesture

The last case of extreme tree hugging in B.C. involves the famed "hollowtree" in Vancouver's Stanley Park. Though its giant trunk is dead, and has been since the 1900s, it's leaning at a precarious 21 degree angle, and supported by more cable than the Lanes Gate Bridge. Plans to lay the tree on its side and let it return to the earth have been thwarted for months by the Hollow Tree Conservation Society's latest proposal: it now asks \$215,000 to support the tree with steel anchors. Justly, there are better uses for the money, like helping the dozens of homeless who sleep in the park every winter.

Are you kidding?

A new book called *The Self-Knower* by post-silencing Pollyanna Dismantler argues that cultivating a sense of entitlement in young people, masked as self-esteem, can create more problems than it solves. School administrators in Britain might want to pick up a copy. According to the *Telegraph*, students as young as 10 have been asked to put take in the during process of new teachers in north London. Can

Pounded

Canadian International Olympic Committee member Dick Pound is blunt and passionate, certainly. But racist? Hardly. Yes, he spoke in a French-language interview, saying Canada was once "a land of savages." But the quick condemnation by B.C. Premier

MITCHEL RAPHAEL ON AN MP'S QUICK-THINKING GRANDSON AND WHERE WERE THE CONGRATS?

HOW MPS DEAL WITH THEIR CHURCH

FORREST BLAC MF RAYON and GAVEL, an openly gay Catholic priest and former neo-nazi member, was told by the Vatican he had to choose between being a priest or being a priest. He decided not to run in the last election. Newly elected Liberal MP Rob Olliphant will not have the same problem. The openly gay minister notes that "in the United Church, [that] has not been an essential agreement with the tenets of the church, we are all given independence in our thinking. So we're not tied to the

bury line of the Church like Roman Catholics?" To help his minister's degradation in good standing, however, Cliphart will have to send a letter to his Church explaining why the work he is doing is "conventional" and not "controversial" or "arbitrary" as opposed to such "other work." Cliphart says his edition of NDP MP Bill Blaikie, a United Church minister who served in the House from 1979 to 2006, did the same thing. Cliphart won the "Outstanding" previously held by Liberal John Godfrey. Don Valley West has the largest Muslim population of any Canadian riding. Abul K. Hingorji, the past president of the 12,000-member South Asian mosque in Cliphart's riding, says

The MP's minutes on the campaign was, "When it comes to votes [in the House] I am not going to consult my Bible, I am going to consult my constituents." He says he would not have supported Conservative MP Kenneth Clarke's bill to amend the 1988 Human Rights Act. "To me it was one of those tricky little wedge issues to bring back the abortion debate," says Glynn. "I am very clearly pro-choice." Glynn was the lead winner at Eglinton St. George's, Union

[illegible]

MP'S GRANDSON HELPS POLICE MAKE AN ARREST

Elle MP Nicole Demery had a big scare during the close campaign. Her 15-year-old grandson was approached online by a sexual predator. The proudly told Capitol Daily that the boy was smart enough to phone the police, who then asked him to keep the man online and to arrange a meeting. Her grandson did, and the police rubbed the man and took him into custody. Turns out that he was a repeat offender, too. ■

honour a special request. Fiol's now deceased mother had terminal cancer and told the couple "If you are ever going to get married I would like to see it."

YOU DIDN'T CALL.

NDF MPs and candidates in the last election attended the launch of the left-wing trade union news site www.worship.ca at the Steam Whistle brewery in Toronto. The

DEVL. OF A TIME Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning calls a play against the Tennessee Titans; the Colts lost 31-31

Toast to the 'Post'

Ten years ago this week, a newspaper hit the Canadian market and had an immediate and profound impact. The *National Post* not only shook up Canada's media establishment, it expanded the country's political conversation, providing a diversity of opinion on a wide range of public issues. The *Post* has since re-

water is a "human right," not a commodity to be bought and sold. But a full and open debate on the future of water trade is essential to address global shortages. By naming a trade opponent as its water guru, the UN has shut down that discussion.

NEWLY ELECTED MP Rob Olliphant (top left), (clockwise from top right) former MP Raymond Givens, MP Nicole Gerners, MP Lindsay Givens (left) with Lorraine Segata, MP Bob Rae, William O'Connor, (bottom) Dennis Chiu, El-Panouk Khaki

hep was smart enough to phone the police, who then asked him to keep the man online and to arrange a meeting. Her grand son died, and the police raided the man and took him into custody. Turns out that he was a repeat offender, too. ■

ON THE WEB: For more Ottawa-sourced or to contact Mitchell Raphael visit marl.com.ca/mitchelraphael

**THERE'S A POINT TO THIS.
IT MAY TAKE FOUR YEARS TO FIND IT,
BUT THERE'S A POINT.**

At one time or another in your life, you have owned a car that disappointed you. From the big, to the small, there had to be something that got in the way of you being entirely satisfied.

Maybe it was the clicking sound beneath the dash that haunted your dreams. A windshield that always cracked in the same place. Fluids that leaked, and turned your garage floor into some depressed kid's potato painting. Sensors that only picked up now age experimental jazz stations. Brakes like a dog whistle—that only humans hear.

The engine that died on the way to the interview for a job you never would've gotten anyway (or so you tell yourself in retirement). The cup holder that, one day, decided not to come out and greet you in the morning.

An conditioning that biased, angry that you had brought it out of hibernation. Hostlers that chirped (a Nuthatch, your Uncle Benny knowingly pointed out). Transmissions that slipped and left you in second. Backseats that never got you past first.

Ran that compromised the seal in your window, running your new calculator watch. The spare that

was flat. Foggy windows on dry days. A brake light that only worked when you hit the gas.

Rust.

It's an exhaustive list, we know, and by no means complete. But you get the point.

We all know the cliché. Life is far too short to be unhappy. It's something not lost on all of us at Nissan. After all, we're drivers too. So when we set out to create the new Altima we decided to shake things up, do things differently.

We call it *Stokecraft*, or *Safe Search* (you'll probably find the latter easier to pronounce, and far less embarrassing at dinner parties). That is, if you talk about cars at dinner parties.

Safe Search is the process with which we made the new Altima, a process that involves 4 years (that didn't take too long, did it?) of constant testing from the very minute the pen hits the drafting table, to the second it's driven off the lot.

First, we use common sense. Everybody talks to each other. From the designers, to the engineers, manufacturing, right down to the showroom floor, everyone collaborates. That way, for example, a flaw,

unforeseen by the people who want to make it look pretty, is addressed by those who want to turn your knuckles white every time you hit the gas. And vice versa. By the way, we sell those too.

Next, come the checks. Hundreds of them. Throughout the production of each Altima, body shop, paint shop, hard trim, and soft trim, all will be checked, and re-checked to see that what they are doing is up to code.

And then there are the tests. Thousands, all told. And we're not talking about multiple choice, or essays where you just make stuff up. No cramming the night before here.

Yes, real tests that require us to actually drive every single Altima that comes off the end of the production line.

Impressive. Yet, so are the Quality Specialists who perform them. They're called *Special & Rustle Experts*—nothing to do with mice and snakes. A *Special & Rustle Expert*, there are 70 of them at the plant, will drive each freshly-minted Altima for more than 7 minutes as soon as it comes off the line. And drive it hard.

To see if there are wind noise and suspension issues, there are two 112 km/h straightaway tests. There's a 14 km/h torsional fold test that looks for squeaks and rattles, hence the name, from the suspension or body. A specially-designed course simulates acceleration and handling as up to par

Also, a patch and concrete road that simulates the effects of up to 600,000 potholes.

Why all the tough stuff, you ask?

Well, ultimately, if any Altima has the slightest abnormality, the *Special & Rustle Expert* is only too happy to squawk & rattle.

Let's be honest here. There will be Altimas that don't make the cut.

When all is said, and done, you have yourself a car so thoroughly tested, you'd think it'd have an anxiety attack every time it passes a school bus. Get used to it. Given the power under the hood, you'll be doing plenty of passing.

Every Altima is a car unlikely to annoy. No more mysterious thump when you pass a fire hydrant. Paint that chips if you look at it wrong. A trunk that only closes when you lock the bumper.

It takes 4 years to get here, but, ultimately, it's highly unlikely you will ever be disappointed with your Altima.

That is, unless, of course, you're a sucker for punishment. You secretly enjoy being disappointed every time you get behind the wheel. In that case, there are plenty of other cars out there that will, well, keep you satisfied. **THE 2009 NISSAN ALTIMA.**





'It's bizarre that we could have had a woman in the White House, we might have had a black man—but not if they were atheists'

WRITER JULIAN BARNES TALKS TO KENNETH WHYTE ABOUT HIS ATHEISM AND SAINTS, HIS PARENTS AND WHAT MAKES FOR A BEST DEATH

Q You spent, I imagine, a year or two, at least, working on your new book. Nothing to be frightened of, thinking about death and near-avoided death—were you able to come up with a way around it?

A It's as if I'd said the spirituality race results at 110 out of 100. I didn't expect to discover a loophole in the writing of the book. It's a subject that has been with me for 50 years, since I first had what the French call *le mal de vivre*—the awful feeling of the fact of death, and I suppose I've been heading towards it as the subject of a book for about 20 years, and then my father died and that was obviously a focus in this book coming into existence.

Q What was it about your parents' death that opened the subject?

A Well, I'm not one of those writers who say, "Oh, I could write a book about my parents dying." It never crossed my mind. It's taken a lot of working out at a subversive level—an unconscious level—before it came to the moment where I thought, "Yes, I now see how I can do my death book. It's the great start to a memoir, it's gotta move into essay, and move back and forth between memoir and essay, move from the particular to the general." As a result I [can only do] with general ideas when they're attached to people, and the two people whose deaths I worried most about were those of my parents.

Q Your first line is, "I don't believe in God but I mean him."

A That's right, yes. I just found myself saying that when I was in some public stage and someone said, "Do you believe in God?" and that satirical instant response, and it was one that on reflection I thought was true. I grew up as a family where, probably because the point when my grandmother lost her Methodist faith and became a Communist or socialist—sorry, oh, 50 years ago, there hasn't been anything that you would call faith in the family, let alone church attendance. But, you know, when a great story ends I think we all miss it, and it was a great story. Those were aspects of it that leave a sense of want. One is that if life is a mass parade or preparation for something else, then life becomes both more trivial and more important, and if not then we can grow to our full height but that height is comparatively dwarfish. If this is all there is and this is all we are then it's a bit disappointing.

Q This book talks about various writers and friends contemplating death and contemplating heaven, and I can't recall one depiction of heaven being the last appealing.

A Well, you sound a bit like my brother. I regard myself as a rationalist, but my brother—his spent his life reading ancient philosophy—a tape-recorder and makes me seem sleepy and barely responsive, and so part of the book is a friendly financial argument with my brother. He says, "We have to have to spend eternity in the presence of

saints and angels," and I say, "Well, actually, saints won't sit pass, bored, all day. They were often at the cutting edge of social change and they had often very interesting deaths, as well. And I imagined a man they're probably some of the most intelligent, sophisticated people on the earth. After all, Denis Diderot—after which the champagne is named—was a monk." I don't see why you should think that heaven must be infinitely boring.

Q You write elsewhere that we have replaced our traditional ideas of heaven with a secular, modern heaven of self-fulfillment, where all that counts down to development of the personality and having a high status job and pursuing material goals, which means, relative to what you've described, rather grim.

A I think that modern society has become more secular and self-sufficient and more secure because we've reached a point of paradise. We now often need someone else to define what heaven we want, and in the old days religion did that for us, and nowadays it's a function of capitalism trying to sell us stuff, or to our bodies, or make us forget about death. So I don't think it's a substantial improvement.

Q You quote somebody—I think it might have been Nietzsche—on atheism being:

A As Nietzsche, yes, that's Nietzsche. I find that the headline atheist's dismissal of people's religious beliefs is merely stupid and primitive is arrogant. And, you know, I agree with that that this is all we have in all probability, but I don't believe that

people who have a religious faith are necessarily either bogus or stupid. What I'm saying is that I find the spiritual or religious impulse in people to be natural and to be respected, even if the dogma in the name of established churches are often refuted and oppressive.

Q There seems to be more certainty about atheism in the U.K. when in a lot of the rest of the world we're seeing something of a revival in religious fervor.

A Yes. The firm, after all, gave Darwin to the world. I think in Europe the retreat of the tradition of religion is strong. The collapse of religion in Ireland, for example, and France, and my father once truly has been quite provocative.

Q America being, now, a great exception.

A America is a great exception. I've seen America's message to religion, extreme materialism with extreme religiosity, and it is a bizarre thought that in this presidential cycle we could have had a woman in the White House, we might have had a black man in the White House, but if either of them had said they were atheists neither of them would have had a hope in hell, all too likely.

Q Who was it that said death is not an enemy?

A It was Jules Renard. I think he meant that we mustn't try to glamourize death, that death is a man doing his job. He's a boxer, he's an assassin. We shouldn't think of death as being something that comes into our life as a particular anxious moment, i.e., to bring our life's story to its appropriate conclusion. Death is much more of a sort of low-square berth or who doesn't make an unreasonable claim.

Q I don't know what I find more terrifying, that idea, or the idea that death could be an agent who might want to stage massive self-destruction to make us suffering just a little more acute.

A No, no. It's like the old style way of thinking about death was that it was a man-to-death—with a saying and a quick coming for us, whereas in fact it's written into our DNA. We carry death within us. Though that takes a bit of getting used to. It's very hard for us to think there's nothing special about me dying, that's no plan or so.

Q What's the best death that you can come across, one that you would choose for yourself?

A Oh, that is one question I haven't been able to answer.

Q A.E. Housman was good.

A Yes, he had order and first of all the doctor told him a dying job, then he gave him a final euphoric injection, and I think Housman said, "Finally done." That's pretty

second. I could do without the dirty job. I would rather listen to a great piece of music.

Q His sentiment that people tend to waste more time than, say, literature.

A I suspect that I would, having space; my time with words, with the beautiful drudgery of words. There's something, you know, more intrinsic about music. The earliest death would be a golden one in a state of calm and philosophy in the presence of people who you loved or worked of, and, and, whereas more likely than not you'll die, in the Western world nowadays, in hospital rather than at home, often at a very early in the morning having been kept alive for longer than you should have been and in a state of delirium, quite possibly, or severely weakened.

Q Do people want to die that way?

A No, being in good health at the moment, I can say I would cheerfully die about myself, but I have a great cheerful friend who says when it comes to you will always want that extra bit of life.

Q There was a really interesting story in the book about a CEO, a very successful, paid acting and paid advertising man who finds he has a few months to live, and starts to look back on his work and any other problem.

A It's a death that makes one as both adorable and rather terrifying. It's admirable in that we want to die in character, and here's this CEO of a big American company who, very, very methodically unravels all his relationships, he brings himself to a second meeting with a man at a meeting or phone call, and he dies in exactly as if there's a major problem that has to be solved as he becomes, but the difference being that this isn't a problem that can be solved. And then, he does go back to the death in a way, or back to some spiritual belief, which is perhaps a cop-out. But the way he goes about it is impressive, to say the least.

Q You write the book starts from your thoughts, musitations and reading. You don't spend much time with people who are dying.

A No, I'll spend time with my parents. Q: But you actually haven't been in the presence of someone as they died.

A No, I've never seen it. It's clearly a personal book, both in its essay side and its memoir side. It adds up to a sort of slice through time. One of the ideas of thought in the book is about how we are anxious in the running of our own lives, and how there are certain areas where we think we know what we're doing, usually in work areas. But in terms of relating to the emotional life and the spiritual or the now now instantly spiritual life, we say it. We don't think about death as often as it's a sudden bit of anxiety and, well, how are you going to cope with it? We're basically all of you and your area.

Q Do you think anyone has a choice for the kind of a death that Montaigne described, the ones with dignity and courage and something less words to friends and family?

A You don't hear about it much, do you? I mean, we've grown suspicious of famous last words. They seem sort of heroic and I don't really live in heroic times anymore. I don't think we should expect to be put in circumstances where we can have a good death, put that way. It may be that the good death nowadays is the digital one, which is the chosen mode when things get too bad.

Q You seem to favor human over machines.

A It's a mixture of *delectable* movies, a sort of sentimental hope that someone in the future will want to visit my grave because they liked one of my books, and also a sort of absurd thought that there might be some



'The headline atheist's dismissal of people's religious beliefs as stupid and primitive is arrogant'

sort of technology to regroup people who are dead and it might be interesting to regroup a writer and say if the reader up writing Flaubert's *Bourgeois* all over again. But this is pretty desperate and financial stuff, I admit, and also I think even if you express a choice between burial and cremation you very often find that whoever's in charge thinks, "Oh, well, we can't be bothered with that. He was just hallucinating when he said he wanted to be buried. He didn't really mean it." ■



HE WON. NOW WHAT?

After the challenges of the economy and Quebec, is there room for Harper to grow?

BY AARON KENNEDY AND JOHN COHEN
At his best, Stephen Harper is a confident actor in a series of Ottawa institutions. The steady technocrat taking control of the Canadian Alliance. The conflictual bringer together the Conservative party. The authoritarian disciplinarian on an inexperienced government. The dignified parliamentarian resigning the Quebecois nation, resigning the Afghanistan compromise and outwitting the inside rival who's apology. The family man promising to protect your children from economic struggle, criminal gangs, harrowed tobacco and, against all, Stéphane Dion.

"What Harper has proven to be is the right character for the drama," says Tina Powers, the Conservative strategist. "And he's played different roles and played them well."

Consequently, he struggled more in this fall's election when he was forced to improvise. When the market was in turmoil, and the situation seemed dire for the conservative with the public, he opened instead for difficulties, telling Canadians to stop worrying and buy more stock. And when relatively minor debt-holding in state funding made him seem the most opportunist, he told the Quebecois (especially in Quebec), he chose not to assume such a characterization, but resolved it with a majority government. And, as he

in those relatively small moments the actor to celebrate for his discipline seemed to lose the plot and, in the process, his happy and ring of a majority government. And, as he

begin his second term, there are two tests for all of the roles he must now master: outside renewal of the national economy and inside renewal of all Canadians (especially in Quebec). Michael's is exploring the challenges now facing each of the major parties for the Tories, these include the economy, Quebec and the power of a majority government. All of which come back to Harper and the issue he chose to run on, leadership.

The first challenge is a gradual and personal. The central issue, and perhaps the defining issue, of his prime ministerial role will be the economy. Powers says—but one that requires almost contradictory logic: "I think that probably the right policy course is the one that's probably the most difficult for a politician, and that's not to do much," says Don Drummond, the TD-Canada chief economist. "I don't think there's a lot he can do. It's a \$1.5-trillion economy. So if you wanted to

move the economy by one percent you'd go to plunk down \$15 billion. Suppose you did \$5 billion, which would be more of a manageable number, you're talking about moving the economy by one-third of a percent. So if I took the Bank of Canada's forecast they just released, a 6 per cent growth for 2009. For \$5 billion you could move that to 6.9 per cent. Where else does it?"

It is a matter then of expectation and perception, something Harper seemingly once to realize before the election even concluded. After declaring Canadians were not worried about their finances or jobs and suggesting the stock market then presented "buying opportunities," Harper began referring his mother and children to explain his own worries. Within a week, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty was offering a complete review. "People are worried about the global economy and its effects on Canada. They're not worried about their job security, they're worried about their homes. I share their concerns."

But then, the Prime Minister has moved even quicker. As late in voting day, Harper was promising a Conservative government would "never" put government finances into deficit. Then Drummond released a report projecting federal deficits in each of the next four years and suddenly Harper's word was sure. Just three days after accepting his second mandate, the Prime Minister, while promising to balance the books this year, would not reject his previously declared stance. "I don't think we're in a position to go to know all the information in that regard," he said of a budget for 2009-2010. "It would be premature to speculate on that."

"I don't think about it at the time," Drummond says, "but as a newspaper, my jumping out a note saying they were heading into a 100-billion deficit probably did him a favour. The worst thing for a politician is to surprise people with bad news. It's all about controlling it."

Flaherty has announced new measures to reinforce the financial system by buying mortgages through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and guaranteeing some bank loans—but the wider reality remains unmet. The 10 days after Harper's election mandated a novel 25-hour low federalism conference, a pessimistic growth forecast from the Bank of Canada, and a \$10-billion deficit in August for the federal government. And all that has put a lid on a crisis, there is a rather stark political reality of the six provinces Canada has suffered since 1990, each with corresponded with the recent government being guided at the next vote (reduced from a majority to a minority government, or vote-out of office entirely).

Powers is quick to argue the Conservative

governments that struggled in such circumstances—led by the likes of Joe Clark and Brian Mulroney—had to contend with much stronger Liberal parties than the one now looking for its fourth leader this decade. But that economic turmoil also acts as a referendum on leadership—a matter of communication and appearance as much as action or policy. "I mean, there is a horrific economic manager, but his success was in communicating the right things at the right time. And doing it in a manner which was believable."

JASON KENNEDY: Nothing that could be said about his work would be an understatement.



ECONOMIC TURMOIL IS A REFERENDUM ON A LEADER'S STYLE AND SUBSTANCE

able. Mulroney too was a good communicator, but nobody believed him," Powers says. "Clinton had a challenge with optics, but in a Conservative was shielded. Because his entire package of communication—body language, mannerisms, merged words—gave people comfort."

For Harper, the challenge will be learning to better communicate his claims on leadership. "I think he recognizes that, while he didn't win a majority, the support he did get, he got because people do buy that he has good leadership abilities," Powers says. "Would they like him to exercise his leadership in a different way? Well, they're asking for some adjustments, but they do want the core to remain the same."

The case was supposed to be made clear enough to carry Quebec. Conventional wisdom in the early stages of this fall's campaign held that Harper would win a pair of new seats there. Unfortunately for Harper, it turned out that Quebec voters are government support for status and nationalism not as a full, but as a benchmark for Ottawa's sensitivity to their identity. And unlike many voters in the rest of Canada, Quebecers were reluctant to see 14-year-olds sentenced for adult crimes. Still, more was his perception than mere defiance on Harper's part to Quebec institutions on these issues. "I think the small mistakes revealed problems that are more deeply rooted," says Antonio Maheux, director of McGill University's Institute for the Study of Canada. Faced with negative media reaction and critics rallying against them, the Conservatives' ground troops were in a bind. Many were not only in and out of the province, but also in the provincial Action démocratique du Québec, or even from the provincial Liberals. "The Conservatives needed the leadership of strong men," Maheux says. "When the tide began to turn, these kind of people become fence-sitter friends."

That then seems to have proved instructive. "What we're trying to do in Quebec, which is very different than what Conservative movements have tried to do in the past, is that we don't want to rely on another political party's organization, be it the provincial Liberals or the ADQ," said a party strategist. "So it may take a little longer. But at the end of the day, this approach will ensure that the Conservative movement in Quebec has a certain longevity."

But Harper's ability to reach out to francophone Quebec is now blurred. Influential Montreal journalist André Pratte wrote after the campaign that the Quebecers had "seen the rhetoric" said of Stephen Harper once. But the Prime Minister's leadership of his reformers, were back to work almost immediately after the election, opening the Francophone forum in Quebec City with a pledge of new money for the institutional French language network TV5, and declaring himself an "honorary" to Bernard de Charbonville.

Harper's Quebec disappointment suggests he needs to do more. First, he needs to build up a truly Tory organization on the ground, riding by riding—not any understanding. Second, he must find Quebec advocates strong enough to win the next. They clearly will face from Conservatives that might battle in Quebec. And an even more fundamental challenge might be changing. Much of the Prime Minister's purposed appeal in Quebec rests in his move in 2006 to have the House vote to recognize that the "Quebecers have a unique

win a second Canada? Now, Martin Duroon, the ADQ leader, once seen as Harper's natural ally on the Quebec provincial issue, is demanding that the province be entrenched in the Constitution.

Opening up formal constitutional talks, though, is a dangerous task: Harper is unlikely to do. This raises the prospect that in the next Quebec election, widely expected to be won by Premier Jean Charest (in early December, Duroon will tell Quebec voters, over and over, that Harper gave the province only symbolic recognition, not any real power or greater autonomy. Martin argues the Québécois are a nation nation always carried this risk. "Sooner or later," she says, "the whole nation thing was going to reach."

Harper could try to meet by offering some sort of new powers to Quebec, and perhaps all the province. But that, too, would be a high-risk move. "The big challenge is to square the circle of winning Quebec without alienating the rest of Canada," Martin says. And after his lousy performance in the French TV debate during the federal campaign, new doubts have been raised about Harper's ability to aggressively sell new positions in bilingual language. And next time, he could be up against a Quarterly Intelligence Liberator—Michael Ignatieff or Bob Rae—who doesn't carry the awkward baggage Stéphane Dion did as long-time staunch champion of Ottawa's power in his home province.

Yet the disappointing Quebec outcome, and the prospect of more problems brewing in the province, don't necessarily mean the Conservatives must give up dreaming of a majority. The old opinion was that a very majority must win a western base with wide support among soft nationalists (Frenchophone voters in Quebec—the Borden that stood for both John Diefenbaker and Brian Mulroney). Despite the Bloc's surprisingly strong 50-seat showing, however, the Conservatives' 51 MP win last year only a dozen shy of majority. And the trend suggests their 32 new ridings might well be within reach elsewhere in Canada.

The key factor is growing Conservative support in the sort of immigrant-heavy ridings where Calgary MP Jason Kenney has

overshadowed a methodical courting of support in recent years. "Anything that anybody would say about the work of Jason Kenney and the importance of the work," said the Conservative strategist, "would be an understatement."

Party member churches have various ways of gauging strength in those supposed ethnic communities—ranging from Chinese, to Sikh, to Jewish voters. But one way is to parse the results in the 22 ridings in which more than

where the party's vote reached up a single percentage point. On average the Liberal vote share eroded about 3.5 per cent, and the Conservative popular vote improved by 5.1 per cent.

The Liberals continue to enjoy stable leads in many of these constituencies with big immigrant and middle-minority populations. But the swing over three elections in Richmond, where Conservative Alice Wong knocked off long-time Liberal incumbent Raymond Chan, suggests even huge margins aren't unassailable. The Tories stood 10 points behind the Liberals in Richmond in election night 2004, fully 10 points ahead in 2008. No wonder when and suburban constituencies that formerly looked foreign to the Harper Conservatives, with their rural, small-town and small city base, no longer seem out of reach. "Regardless of the region of the country," says the strategy, "the main objective is for the Conservative government to start growing roots in parts of the country where it traditionally didn't have any."

That is long-term thinking in a culture that usually demands short-term satisfaction. Prime ministers from Robert Borden to William Lyon Mackenzie King, Lester B. Pearson to Pierre Trudeau, held on long enough to win in their fourth, or even fifth, elections as leader. They all triumphed after suffering serious setbacks and defeats, and it's been nearly 40 years since a Conservative or Liberal leader lost more than three elections.

Patience, though, is possibly the one unifying quality of all Stephen Harper's characters—a fixer, a survivor, a fighter, a constant man to long-term, even far-off, goals. In that, he surely won the 2008 election as just another way towards the ultimate objective of a sustainable political force capable of regularly winning majority governments for a Conservative prime minister. If that is to become a reality, Harper must figure out how he needs to be. And play the role with enough skill to convince those not already persuaded by his previous turns. ■

Coding just five of 22 on their worst election night since 1987 might not look so bad for the Liberals. Dig a bit deeper, though, and the results look considerably more promising for the Tories. Downers the 2004 and 2008 elections, the Liberal vote share declined in all but one of those 22 seats, the Toronto suburban riding of Scarborough-Rouge River,

HE WILL NEED TO 'SQUARE THE CIRCLE OF QUEBEC WITHOUT ALIENATING THE REST OF CANADA'



NEXT TIME he may face a bilingual Liberal leader with less baggage than Dion

(meet the experts)

To learn more about the concerns of Canadians, see the article in the Meet the Experts Information Supplement.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL FARMER FOR THE CANADIAN PRESS

A LONG COLD WINTER AHEAD

B.C.'s government could wind up running the ski hills

BY NADY MACDONALD • Not a single snowflake has fallen on Whistler, but the famed B.C. resort town is already feeling a chill. Last week, FortisBayermont Group, the New York-based hedge fund that owns Innesmuir LLC, Whistler's Blackcomb's parent company, narrowly averted bankruptcy. After a week of fierce speculation that Fortis would fail to make a deal, an 18th-hour package to refinanced its \$7-billion in interest debt came through. But the relief may be short-lived.

Over the past two decades, B.C. has become a paradise for skiers, snowboarders and outdoor enthusiasts. But many feel that thanks to a host of factors, Whistler's close call is just the beginning, and the province's resort boom could turn into a bust. The industry has kept on opening new hills and building new resorts even as skier numbers have flattened, and the winter demographic is aging quickly. As the global economy sours, B.C.'s many resorts and nearby developments may be facing an ugly awakening.

The most immediate threat facing the industry comes from an impending global recession. Americans in particular have been hit hard by the financial crisis, and a fall quarter of Whistler's visitors are from the U.S. Already, the local tourist board is predicting a 10 per cent decline in visits this season. Like a worldwide, longer-term threat is on the horizon too. As today's skiers age, they're not being replaced by younger blood. Ridership at B.C. ski hills peaked at 6.2 million in the winter of 2003-2004, and within the next decade, skier visits are projected to drop by half a million. Those days, when the toques come off, you're likely to see a head full of grey hair, the average skier ages 40 and getting older each year.

Oddly enough, though, fewer skiers may not be the industry's biggest problem. That's because the ski industry doesn't make much money from doing anything, says Paul Reid, co-owner of a California-based CNBC analyst and co-author of the infamous *Great Business Idea*. Ski hills are inherently not that profitable, he explains. They have massive, fixed costs due to snow-making and daily run maintenance, plus the waning of staff who run the lifts, day lodges, parking lots and ski patrols. So lift-ticket revenue, which brings in \$100 to \$150



SKI TRAFFIC IN B.C. peaked in 2003, and officials expect a 10 per cent drop this year.



a head for less than six months of the year, isn't the real money-maker. "The dirty secret of the ski industry is that there isn't a ski industry," says Reid. "It's a real estate industry." And indeed, in 2006, real estate profits alone made up two-thirds of Innesmuir's \$348 million operating profit.

Since much of the money in the ski industry now comes from selling property, it's no surprise that as real estate has boomed in B.C., so have the hills. Adding fuel to the fire, the province has "accelerated" tourism-sector

development, says an official with the resort development branch of B.C.'s Tourism Ministry. Not only does the province subsidize the industry with cheap land, priced at \$5,000 per acre for the first 10 years, but the 1986 *Cowen and Alton* Policy stipulates that if a hill goes bankrupt, or the owner walks away, the province is required to step in and run the resort until a buyer can be found.

Given all those incentives, it's no surprise that over the past five years, the local ski industry has undertaken its biggest expansion ever. Less than a year ago, the province's newest billion-dollar hill, Revelstoke Mountain Resort, opened for business. Four B.C. resorts are currently undergoing complete renovations, and just last week, developers cut ribbon at an all-season resort on the northern B.C. town of Squelch. Three more developments are pending approval, including Jumbo Glacier, a commercial \$450-million project near Kamloops, whose lifts will allow year-round skiing on a series of glaciers in winter-snow terrain, and Joffre Creek, a mountain lift for the Cogitella Pass, a two-hour drive from downtown Vancouver.

When Victoria agreed to buy back the industry in 1994, B.C. had a scattering of low-key mom-and-pop hills. Now the province is standing behind an industry worth several billion dollars, and as Whistler's close call showed, parts of that industry are on shaky ground.

As long as boomers were swapping up hill properties in B.C., and the province's ski hills were chomped with Ben and Anson's, the industry was a money machine. When Reid's first two condo projects hit the market last month, they sold out in three hours. But what will happen if B.C.'s all-season market hits the slopes? Resort projects as an intended pivot to real estate have—when money gets tight, the hillside home is the mountain is the first to go. Because of this, Reid believes the "perfect storm" could be about to hit. And it won't be one of those helpful storms that dump a layer of silver powder. It would be the nation's worst B.C. ski hill have-over event. ■



CANADA IS NOT A HAVEN FOR WAR CRIMINALS

"The importance of preserving the integrity of Canada's citizenship from disloyalty, and a recognition of Canada's obligation to ensure that there is no safe haven for those involved in horrendous historical events, enables me to reject any exercise of discretion."

—Justice Michel Phillion of the Federal Court of Canada, on upholding the loss of citizenship of Helmut Oberlander (84) on the grounds he was a Second World War Nazi death squad

BY PETER SHAWN TAYLOR • Troubled North Central Region has seen more than its share of bad news. The grim combination of Aboriginal poverty, drugs, gangs and crime moved *Medicine* to call it the "worst neighbourhood in Canada" in January 2009. That attention, however, seemed to spark a new attitude among residents and government. Since last year, a whole range of new initiatives have flooded the area. The latest is the creation of a new urban reserve.

Urban reserves offer a mix of the advantages of traditional rural reserves, but as downtown areas with greater economic opportunity. Canada's first such reserve was established in 1988 in Saskatoon, and there are now approximately 10 across the province. Regina's is the first for the city.

"Our membership is very excited about our new urban development," says Paper First Media's Chief Executive, Richard Boddie, who is in



CIRELAND Mini-mart's profits will help natives living near Regina

reserve is 60 km outside Regina. Creland Mini-mart, the first business on the new downtown reserve, will start pumping gas and selling snacks on Nov. 5.

Rockefeller expects to hire 21 Paycom members to run the gas bar and store, and promises that profits will go to housing and education on the main reserve. Eventually, he hopes to deliver social programs for natives living in North Carolina. "Our priority is that we have to look after our own," he says.

The initiative is not without controversy. The Canadian Taxpayers Federation opposes the mini trust, arguing that it's unfair to non-native businesses. The state's native employees won't pay income tax, and cigarettes and gas will be free for native consumers. "It welcomes this new business to the area," says Lee Harding of the CTF. "But the real issue is whether a tax system that discriminates on the basis of race is good for Canada."



BY NICHOLAS KOHLER—Last week, as he billed his campaign as the Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama drew crowds tens of thousands strong. In the bellwether state of Missouri he spoke to over 175,000.

by some fishermen. "All I can say is—Wow!" he told the throng, as though such events rarely happen, the product of good weather and enthusiasm.

Canada must not have much of either. The biggest crowd during our election was probably for Stephen Harper, and it weighed in at less than 2,000. Which raises the question: if massive rallies work in the U.S.—why don't we have them here?

Tory MP Jason Kenny says the women rest more because crowd manufacturing takes work, and

our political types have decided it's not worth the hassle. "I think they're of limited utility," he says. "A lot of parties in Canada are dead because they don't get much bang for the buck in terms of allocating scarce resour-

you go other than an arena in Canada—and if it's winter, where do you go unless it's a covered arena?" asks Liberal MP Joe Walby. "You can count those on one hand and they're thousands of kilometers apart!"

Electrons are shorter in Canada, too, so events must be planned just days in advance. And while Wolfe argues that large carnivals in the U.S. modern is certain to see some quality to Obama, others attribute them to seasonal election madness. One cynic

Finance laws discourage racetrack events, one Tory says, adding his party couldn't afford the \$100,000 prize tag attached to big races, given a budget of \$10 million and a saved treasury that costs \$5 million. "Obama has an unlimited budget, so they can finance the advertising and seminars and mailings it takes to organize something like this—these things don't happen spontaneously," says Kinnear.

Fraction between local candidates and the national parties in Canada can also rule out big crowds: Simple door-knocking is more likely to win an MP's seat than an appearance on TV with Steve or Solphara. "In the U.S., you're not overwhelming all the people organizing the congressional campaigns to turn people out—they're different operations," says Liberal organizer Mark Masseron. "The people you call [here] are all in the riding campaigns—and they grow."

It was not always thus. Liberal Senator Edward Brooke recalls seeing Lyndon B. Johnson, no less,



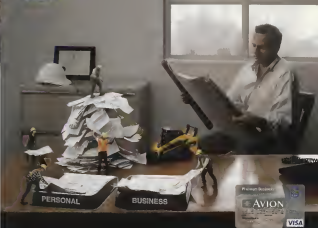
SURE, SOME are gummyelastic, but we don't have huge rallies like Obama has in the U.S.

tree presence, park Maple Leaf Gardens. Trudeau commiserated Obama-esque crowds, and years later, Reform shindigs did too. "People didn't have as busy schedules as they do now," says Smith. "A little wealth," and the need

That's certainly true in B.C., where the demands of Toronto news deadlines make rallies don't work. "You can't do anything after lunch in Vancouver," says Marissen. "It won't be on the news. So what's the point?" ■



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A SUNNI WIDOW'S LAMENT

Her husband went to look for a safer place to live. He didn't return.

BY ADAM B. KHAN • Baghdad's pathless streets and alleys are a rich repository for legends. Under every crumbling rooftop and through every atmospheric, narrow doorway there is someone who can tell a story of pain and loss. Stories are what Baghdad is famous for, ever since Saddam's war on Kuwait at the first of the 1990s and won a war of tales that lasted 100 years. But she was selling her soul to save her life. These days, Baghdad's residents tell stories to make sense of their

They are of these husbands and brothers, and of thousands of women who endure violence pined neighbour against neighbour. Often the tales begin like this: "My husband left the house one day and he never came back." That is how Ghina Hammad begins her story. "It was a Tuesday morning and he went to look for a place to live in a Sina neighbourhood," she says, in her flat in her husband's house in Baghdad's predominantly Shiite Sadr City district, remembering in painful detail what life was like in 2006, at the height of Iraq's sectarian war: "We'd found a nice place a few days earlier that said it was just a few minutes from that neighbourhood or they would be killed. My husband was like: "

Ullrich is also a Somali. Her husband was Shis. Their names clashed from another angle, when Somali and Shis lived side by side in peace, sharing each other's meager existence in a country crippled by war. On that morning, for the sake of his family's safety, he, along with his two brothers, left Addis Ababa and walked across Baghdad's red soil. That was the last time Ullrich has seen any of them alive. "We picked up their bodies a few days later at the Iraqi Capital City," she says, referring to the most deadly campaign against Baghdad, when most of this city's victims of violence either ended up, their bodies piled one on top of the other, in the city's "graveyards."

Ullrich has a husband and two children. Her husband, like many of the men in the Iraqi Capital City, has a lucky, they say. Only he has been spared. He and his wife and children that were in terrible conditions, with their fingers cut off, heads crushed. It was a horrible scene.

The carnage that gripped Baghdad during those gruesome years remains an indelible scar on Baghdad's collective psyche. It began soon after the 2003 invasion, and at its height left nearly 100,000 wounded and broken bodies a

UHM HUSSEIN WITH SOME 'WE WERE LUCKY' SAYS. 'THEY'D ONLY BEEN SHOT IN THE HAND'

day scattered around the desolate alleyways of the old city. In what could be called a novel twist to an all-too-common Iraqi tale, Umm Hassan's husband and his brothers were killed by Shia militiamen who mistook them for Sunnis. That's how random Baghdad's sectarian killings were: the slightest suspicion of belonging to the wrong sect could mark a man for death.

"We don't even know why the Sargis and Shu started killing each other," says Umm Ali, Umm Hassan's 59-year-old mother, holding back tears at the thought of her dead son-in-law. Both mother and daughter refuse to give their full names, instead using the common

Arab practice of associating names with offspring (Hussein) means "mother of Ali"—the younger woman's brother—Umm Hassan means "mother of Hassan"—her five-year-old son). The fact that both males are named after Shea revered saints is in itself telling.

Umun Husein still lives with her husband's family in Afghanistan. "I never wanted to leave," says Adil Jawad Sayed, her 56-year-old father-in-law, barely able to disguise his anger. "I told my sons to stay as well. We were all born in this neighborhood—our neighbors know us, they protected us. But my sons wouldn't leave. These sons pushed them to go, and now they are dead." Umun Husein appears

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not to notice the situation, or choose to ignore it. It is customary, Umm Hassan says, for the husband's family to look after her and her new children, though she admits she couldn't go home to her relatives as this would mean they are the one poor.

Her Shia husband and his two brothers had alienated Shia women from Adhnam, and they were proud of it. Adhnam's sister, some of the most beautiful women in Baghdad, the local men say—a prison prisoner in this unbreakably male-dominated society. The husbands went off to work every day and the three women stayed in the household chores, building steadily bonds that would ultimately survive all of the horrors that were to follow.

Then the trouble started. "It wasn't all of sudden," says Umm Hassan, who was 22 at the time, with a two-year-old boy. "A few bad nights and then, always Shia. We heard stories about Sunnis being killed in other parts of the city but it all seemed so far away at the time. We never imagined how far it would go" but as the killings escalated, so did the mistrust in her neighborhood. Strange faces started to turn up, "strangers" from various groups who gathered in food lines at the district's local market, mostly poor youth, were welcomed into these groups with what Umm Hassan calls "promises of affluence and glory."

It had nothing to do with religion. "There used to be no difference between Sunnis and Shias," says Sayed, "except that we prayed at different mosques. We lived together, we married each other, we loved together. We are all Muslims." But the Sunnis and Shia death squads behind the killings saw things differently. Young men of fighting age from the opposing sect were a threat. Adhnam quickly turned into a killing field.

"It was bad," Umm Hassan says. "Every time I left the house, I feared for my life. I thought everyone knew I was married to a Shia and they would kill me because of that." Now that there is some semblance of peace in Adhnam, she is allowing herself a small window of hope. "The Shias are looking after things now," she says, referring to the former Sunni insurgents, some of whom themselves are likely guilty of sectarian killings, who, at the end of 2006, joined the American-led fight against al-Qaeda in Iraq, and bringing a sudden, albeit uneasy, halt to the bulk of the fighting. "They helped me open my shop. They protect us now."

That clothing and accessories shop she subcontracted her husband produce among income for herself and the rest after father-in-law's benevolent. Meanwhile, Shia who had been slowly winning. A local Shia administrator says 100 Shia families have returned to their homes. "We never forced these

Shias to leave," he insists. "It was those foreigner, those al-Qaeda fighters, who were responsible. That's what the reason we drove them out of Iraq." At least that's the thread the story of Adhnam's is taken over. The same reason is embraced in Shia districts: if it wasn't us, the local Shia say, it was outsiders. We love our own brothers and sisters.

But it's a strange kind of love, one that can turn to hatred at any moment. At Umm Hassan's home, the tension is thick, the air is too tense to speak freely, she says, but willing to hear \$500 to her clothing shop the debt is not rejected. "My father-in-law controls everything," she says then. He wants to make sure the three sisters-in-law, she adds, "leave



HE WAS SHIA—KILLED BY FELLOW SHIA WHO MISTOOK HIM FOR AN IRAQI SUNNI



SHE AND HER SON sit in the with her Shia father-in-law (top)

us as Sunnis. He speaks all of his money from the shop and spends it on his own family." The Shias have promised to help. At their local office in her neighborhood, Umm Hassan pleads with one of the ministers to force her father-in-law to return to his own district. "We will talk to him," the minister says. "Don't worry. You are Shia. We are with you." Umm Hassan seems it is the Shias, and only the Shias, who look after her. She helps her open up her clothing store, the only means for her family to survive Iraq's crippling poverty. "They protect it," she says. "They protect me. I don't know what I would do without them."

In the weeks to come, she may have no choice but to find out what life will be like without her Sunni protection. As Iraq's con-

tinued Iraq's inter-sectarian civil war. According to the Brookings Institution, a Washington-based policy group that has been monitoring Iraq's displacement, communal violence in Iraq is generally on the rise once again, targeting families who attempt to return to the homes they vacated in both Sunnis and Shia neighborhoods.

That there is no chance of reconciliation between the sects with Baghdad's neighborhoods divided, breaking down the barriers will not be easy. Umm Hassan is only willing to speak in qualified terms about the potential for a return to the tolerance that Baghdad once enjoyed—once Iraq. The city has seen its thousand and one dark nights, but the lighter tale may grow longer. ■



NEW JERSEY: KIDS ON DRUGS GET A DOG.
U.S. parents worried that a child may be using marijuana longer have to risk embarrassing and possibly ruthless discovery. For \$120,000 a year they can hire a dog sniffing dog "Sniff Dog" to sniff out their 10-year-old children to see if they are using marijuana. Business owner Don Stone says he has a good deal as experienced at sniffing out heroin, marijuana, cocaine, ecstasy and even Xanax. Stone is a go up, though. "Sniffing is not confidential!"

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANJALA BANA

Retribution for a 12-year-old slave girl

BY SIBAN MOHAMMAD • A West African man has convinced Niger's government of failing to prevent a 12-year-old girl from being sold into slavery. The precedent-setting case could help thousands of African who are still enslaved in Niger and neighboring states by bringing more attention to their plight, and forcing governments to do more to eradicate the problem.

The state of Niger argued that it had done everything possible to end slavery, which it outlawed just five years ago. But the Court of Justice for the Economic Community of West African States ruled otherwise on Monday. Niger was ordered to pay Hadjima Mita 10 million CFA francs (about \$21,000) in damages for allowing her to be sold into forced domestic and farm labor in 1996 for about \$400.

"We are now shifting and will respect the decision," Moussa Boudoune, an official for Niger's government, said. Raising the age of the government, however, says the ruling is proof that the government needs to do more to implement laws against forced labor.

Aid Slavery International reports that 45,000 slaves are still enslaved in the state (mostly in rural areas), and that the children of slaves are often "inherited" by their masters. The U.N.-based group was successful in helping Mita, now 24, bring her case to court, where she testified that she was born and raised in slavery by her 15-year-old sister. She was sold as a slave for 10 years when she was 14 in 1982, the year given a "liberation certificate," but she was arrested and imprisoned for 10 years after she was married to her master.

Married to her master's son, "my happy" with the decision, adding that she was to court to ensure that her children didn't end up suffering the way she did. The ruling by the panel of judges at a hearing for all 15 member states of the Economic Community of West African States. Human rights groups say the ruling is an emboldening for Niger, which has reportedly denied that it has a problem with slavery. ■



MAMA, NOW 24, sued Niger for allowing her enslavement

Afghan troop withdrawal for a 'surprise'

BY MICHAEL PETROSS • According to Afghanistan's ambassadors in Canada, Prime Minister Stephen Harper gave no warning to the Afghan government before announcing in early September that Canada would withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in 2011.

Harper broke the news during a campaign breakfast meeting with journalists in Toronto, likely in an attempt to neutralize Canada's military presence in Afghanistan as an election issue in Quebec. He had given only a hint that Canada would withdraw from the war in the presence of Kandahar in 2011, but left open the possibility of redeploying Canadian troops elsewhere in the country.

"It was a surprise," Omar Stamat, Afghanistan's ambassador to Canada, recently told *Maclean's* about the announcement. Still, the ambassador was diplomatic about the withdrawal. "This is a reality," he said. "In Kabul, there is a common sense view that there will be a need for NATO forces, whatever their numbers, for a certain period of time. But eventually some NATO countries will start thinking of their exit strategy."

The Afghan government, Stamat said, was already preparing for this eventuality. The ultimate goal is to have the Afghan army and police take over the country's security. But in the near term, U.S. forces will play a most prominent role. More than 120,000 American troops are currently deployed in Afghanistan, and both U.S. presidential candidates



HARPER DIDN'T warn the Afghan ambassador of his announcement

have pledged to end now if elected. According to Stamat, the country's fighting in Afghanistan should withdraw only under certain circumstances. "Not in defense, not in part of an agreement, policy, but with honor and dignity and a sense of achievement." But he added that Canada could meet these criteria by 2011. "Canada has done it."

It can be proud of its contribution, military and civilian, to one of its most important missions since the Second World War. ■

Organ donor reform called for in China

BY ALEXANDRA SHIMO • When a parent has an organ transplant in China, chances are it was harvested from an executed prisoner. In a recent article in the *British Medical Journal*, the *Lancet*, China's vice-minister of health, Huang Jie, writes that more than 30 per cent of transplanted organs in his home country are from prisoners.

The government has strongly defended this practice, but Huang says more regula-



OVER 50 per cent of China's organ transplants come from prisoners

tions are needed to protect prisoners' rights. In particular, he's lobbying for hospitals to adopt "certified standards" and a "transparent system" that properly documents donors and where the body parts have come from, as well as a system for equitably allocating these organs. A "legal framework is urgently needed," he writes.

Until recently, Chinese transplant centres were open to providing their services to Westerners in English on their websites, where they even listed the prices for various organs. A liver or a heart cost about \$120,000, for example, while a kidney cost between \$60,000 and \$90,000.

But owing to international pressure, in June 2007 the Chinese government introduced new legislation giving priority for transplants to its own citizens, followed by the citizens of Hong Kong, Taiwan and Macau. The new law effectively cut off Western access to the organs.

However, some medical professionals say there are still problems. They allege that the speed with which donors and patients are matched seems to indicate that prisoners are being selected before they are killed. There are also accusations from the group Falun Gong that members are killed as their organs are harvested for these organs. The Chinese government denies this practice, but it agrees that more reform is needed. ■

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANJALA BANA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANJALA BANA

HOW SAFE IS YOUR FOOD?

Twenty dead. A company under siege. The unsettling truth about the Maple Leaf outbreak. BY MICHAEL FRISCOLANTI

The Clark family reunion was scheduled for the third weekend of July. Uncle and cousin and in-laws, friends far away in Utah and Florida, had tracked the clan to their celebration headquarters. Plane tickets were booked, motel rooms were reserved, and the venue was set: Madras, Ore., (population 2,044).

Frances Clark was at the center of the plots. The matriarch of the clan baked some of her famous raspberry pies, froze a few pans of homemade lasagna, and spent weeks making sure the chickens—bought by her late husband's grandfather in 1911—looked just right for the big party. "After all, I'm moving the old 'Yes, honey, I'm going to go into the other room and work on that window,'" recalled daughter Karen. "There was time coming on the fence, and she wanted to dig it out so the window would go up and down for the reunion. You wouldn't believe that we was with a barbecue. Mike Holmes had nothing on her." Frances Clark was 89 years old.

Later that morning, she walked to her bedroom for a brief nap. Frances tripped and

decentrated her left shoulder. When Karen came home from work, she found her mother lying on the floor, flat on her back. "I said, 'Mother, what are you doing down there?'" She said. "Well, I thought I'd be better and count the ceiling tiles." She was hysterical. Count the ceiling tiles? How many women, at 89, would say that?

Frances spent the next four weeks at Belleville General Hospital. Although she missed the reunion, her visit of seven sisters made sure to supply for a meal. After they left, Frances made a difficult decision: maybe it's time I visit this at another time. "She was transferred to Stirling House in Aug. '92," her daughter says. "She was making new friends, talking everyone's ear off. This was not some old lady who had lost her marbles and was tied up somewhere, drooling. For heaven's sake."

Two weeks later, Clark was back in a hospital bed, barely conscious and gasping for air. Her temperature skyrocketed, her eyes glazed over, and the antibiotics proved no match for the bacteria coursing through her body. "A couple of times she tried to say a

word or two, but it was incomprehensible," says her son Tim. On Aug. 25, at 5:15 in the morning, Frances passed away. The official cause of death was heart failure, a life-threatening condition that attacks the central nervous system.

Today, Clark's family knows the truth for sure: during her initial stay at the Belleville hospital, she ate served Maple Leaf "Sweet Slice" ham (lot #21446) three separate times. After moving to the nursing home, she ate even more Maple Leaf lunch meat, including turkey and roast beef. "As far as I know," Karen says. "Those products, of course, were later recalled after lab tests revealed dangerously high levels of *Listeria monocytogenes*, the powerful pathogen that causes listeriosis. But for Clark—and 19 others infected by Maple Leaf meat—the recall came too late. She was in the last hours of her life, surrounded by children and grand children, when Michael McCann, the company president, went on television to apologize to the victims."

"Be Careful who you eat and to the families who have lost loved ones, I offer my deepest sympathies," said a member McCann.

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"Words cannot begin to express our sadness for your pain. Our hearts are filled, and we are deeply sorry."

Class action lawsuits have already been launched against Maple Leaf Foods Inc., demanding hundreds of millions of dollars for the company's alleged negligence. "I'm not Karen Clark among the plaintiffs. I'm not Michael. I'm not really had about it, and I think the apology was very sincere," says Tim, who watched McCann's two paid news interviews. "When this happened, who knew? But prevention is the key now. We want to make sure this doesn't happen again."

So do the 19 victims, survivors and every other food safety expert who has spent the past 30 years in a scientific wrestling match with the many little bugs that unfortunately alter countless food supplies and many high-tech health biologists, the experts have reached one unambiguous conclusion: Listeria is unstoppable. As much as the Clarke and all Canadians would like a food-free life, there isn't one. No matter what companies do, no matter how many safeguards they adopt, there will always be that chronic, he-severed slice, that yearn-for-sandwich as your bagged lettuce or your batch of cheese contains a deadly helping of Listeria. "We're going to eat another out-

break just like this one," says microbiologist F. Ann Draughon, co-director of the University of Tennessee's Food Safety Center at Knoxville. "Listeriosis cases are decreasing, but there will be more outbreaks. It is inevitable."

That certainly doesn't comfort Maple Leaf Foods. Their products killed an people (maybe more), infected dozens of others, and made everyone else think twice about eating those cold cuts sitting on the fridge. But was the company negligent? That answer may be impossible to pin down. When it comes to Listeria control, the definition of "best efforts" is more a matter of scientific interpretation than undisputed fact.

He says: not Maple Leaf, and not the food and governments—can test every ounce of lunch meat he buys to be sure the plant. There would be nothing left to eat. The alternative, then, is an implicit compromise that attempts to decrease the danger as much as possible while still ensuring that our super-market shelves are sufficiently stocked. Keeping the food chain free of Listeria is a complex, ever-evolving range of common sense, third-party oversight, targeted testing and a dash of calculated risk. No two as equivalent, as companies follow the same playbook, and the debate over how best to battle this

LISTERIA most often afflicts the ill healthiest. In seven times more likely to contract Listeria than a healthy person from the factory.

Listeria is still very much untreated. Can more be done to lower the odds of another Frances Clark dying? Absolutely. As the experts unanimously on the way to do that? Absolutely not.

Listeria is a microscopic, rod-shaped bacterium, and although it isn't visible to the naked eye, it is all around us. In soil, water, feces, meat, your shoes. For the most part, the organism is harmless, except for that one particular species: *Listeria monocytogenes*. Ironically enough, *L. monocytogenes* was first identified in a food-borne pathogen in Canada, when a batch of chicken killed 17 people in 1988.

In the three decades since, it has been found almost everywhere. It is a very common and usually enough to grow in mild summer months. The bright side? Like salmonella or E. coli, it can be killed with heat. Cook your prime rib properly, and you'll be just fine.

However, ready-to-eat foods—deli meats, fresh produce and frozen cereals that go straight from the grocery cart to your mouth—present a whole different challenge. They are not to be eaten with no heat and no preparation, and they leave the factory food with *L. monocytogenes* going to end up in your stomach (unless you're among the small minority who live on biology).

Most of the time, though, a single serving won't require an ambulance. In fact, researchers believe the average person ingests it more every three to four days—that's 100 times a year—without ever realizing it. The reason: For most, most people are naturally healthy enough to escape its wrath. *L. monocytogenes* is a mix of different strains, and some are much more virulent than others. And because it is a matter of degree, not either-or, most Listeria victims are foods that contain extremely high levels—well over 1,000 "colony forming units" (cfu) per gram.

"There is no such thing as a 100 per cent safe food product," says microbiologist Elbert J. Byers, a food-borne diseases expert at Michigan State University. "But people are consuming bacteria on a regular basis, and some of it's dropping off like flies." Indeed, South of the border, the Listeria rate is a 2.7 cases per million people (in 2008) the latest figures available) the number of confirmed cases in Canada was 19. In the United States, the other hand, infection up to 12,000 Canadians a year.

Still, those epidemiological numbers aren't much more, they say. *Listeria* is responsible for only 0.01 per cent of all food-borne illnesses, but the fatality rate is seriously high, according to 28 per cent of all deaths from

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food-borne illness. This brings bacteria into attack the most vulnerable children, the elderly, and those with weak immune systems. Pregnant women are 10 times more likely to contract listeriosis, with side effects ranging from miscarriage to stillbirth. "My wife is seven months pregnant and she doesn't touch deli meats," says food scientist Doug Powell, director of the International Food Safety Network at Kansas State University. "But not everyone has a PhD in food science."

Adding to the complexity of listeria control is the fact that most contaminated goods don't start out that way. The cow or chicken that becomes your lunch meat, for example, is cleaned and cooked after slaughter, destroying most bacteria. Yet in the final stage of production, when the meat is sliced and packaged, it has the potential to become re-contaminated by listeria cells lurking in the factory. For ready-to-eat food consumers, it is a never-ending game of catch and dodge. "This is an insidious organism that is very hardy and survives very nicely," says John Conway, now retired as manager of microbiology at Oscar Mayer Foods, the U.S. firm famous for its hot dogs. "We're doing everything we can to minimize the problem, but we'll never eliminate it. Not in my lifetime."

For Conway and his fellow scientists, the most frustrating fact about listeria is that it multiplies over time, even in a refrigerated listeria-free turkey container just a meter, that bacteria will inevitably reproduce, especially in an ideal breeding ground like meat, uncooked cold cuts. Leave that same meat on a counter in room temperature, and the growth can be even more rapid—doubling in time every 15 minutes. Think about that: A one-gram piece that begins with 10 listeria cells (an amount widely believed to be harmless) but the potential to reach 20 in just 21 minutes. In less than three hours, it can grow to 25,000—the same fact also discovered in some Maple Leaf products tested after the outbreak.

It is no surprise, then, that Health Canada and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) focus their listeria-fighting efforts on the highest-risk products. According to the current guidelines, foods that do not support the growth of listeria aren't have a shelf life of less than 10 days—red meat, for example, or bagged salad greens contain up to 100 c.f.u. per gram. However, these products that do support bacterial growth—baked meat, hot dogs, deli meats and ready-made sandwiches—must be completely free of the pathogen. Even a single cell will trigger a recall.

Those guidelines, however, are just that: guidelines. Despite as tough, zero-tolerance stance, even Health Canada concedes that up to 10 per cent of all ready-to-eat foods for sale right now contain some level of C. f.u. in a

sanctioning isn't simply not possible. It would be like trying to sub every last insect that drives one kilometer over the speed limit.

A contamination ordered by Stephen Harper in the wake, but the prime suspect in the Maple Leaf outbreak has already been identified: two industrial meat shanks at the company's Brierley Road factory in Toronto. Experts who inspected the plant after it shut down believe the listeria was hiding "deep inside" the machines, then got out to reach consumers that weren't cleaned during routine sanitation. The company suspects the cells originated from one of four possible sources, including drains or an elevator station, before linking that way into the steaks.

The CFIA has since ordered every ready-to-eat meat company to conduct "a systematic and thorough cleaning" of all similar equipment. However, the machine-part question still looms: how could so many cold cuts be so heavily contaminated and still get out the door without anybody noticing?

In the end, experts focused on finding the bacteria where it thrived most in the final product. Hot dogs from three mills were tested for L. monocytogenes and L. listeria, the standard suspects. But that method is far from perfect. Again, it isn't feasible to test every slice. The only alternative—random sampling—has its fall-side effect, because listeria tends sporadically, a few cells here, a few cells there. If you have a 100 g of cured beef, for example, and only one per cent can test it, more, you would need to test 200 samples to ensure a 95 per cent probability of discovering it—and even then, there is still that five per cent chance you won't find it.

Guided by these unsettling statistics, the modern-day protocol has evolved into an industry-wide system of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) verified by regular environmental sampling. Simply put, companies now wash their machines and their factories for signs of listeria, with much less emphasis on the final food. "The focus used to be 'Let's test the dickens out of the finished product,'" says Jeffrey Kornatka, a Wisconsin microbiologist who has advised dozens of food companies. "But people have now realized that almost all the contamination of ready-to-eat foods is coming from the environment of the facility; so we have put an extreme emphasis on testing that."

The devil, as always, is in the details. Although L. monocytogenes is the enemy, food companies usually conduct a generic test for all listeria species, not the dangerous one in particular. The scientists support this approach (it is simpler and cheaper to look for all types), but the technique also provides



"YOU NEVER QUESTIONED THE SAFETY OF YOUR FOOD. YOU JUST ASSUMED IT WAS GOOD."



FRANCES CLARK, CEO after a "double dose" of listeria from hospital and nursing-home food. Her children (left), Karen and Tim.

industry with a movement called *clean* that the government is willing to live with. If companies wish their equipment specifically for L. monocytogenes, they will almost always preempt a costly, embarrassing recall of any meat that touched the line. By looking for listeria—which may or may not be L. monocytogenes used the wrong way. "They will look at that listeria count and say 'Okay, we don't have evidence that our product might be contaminated with L. monocytogenes, but we do have evidence that it used to be contaminated,'" Kornatka explains. "So it kind of gives them out of a tricky situation."

Maple Leaf subscribed to that philosophy before the outbreak, staff recalled the Brierley Road plant for listeria labo tests a year ago positive was discovered on a food contact surface, such as a conveyor belt, employees did what countless other companies do—and what Health Canada advises: They scrubbed the line and tested again. If the next three samples were negative, the problem was considered solved—even though the meat, long gone from the factory, was never consumed. As shocking as that may sound, the science

has long supported that strategy. Study after study has concluded that a mere positive on a food-contact surface is insufficient proof of a widespread problem, and that scouring the machines—not checking the meat—is the prudent response. Even Health Canada recommends end-product testing only after a serious and straight-up environmental problem, which typically suggests a much bigger problem.

But isn't that *prudent* only a question of what the scientific literature says? "Inevitably, some of the product may become contaminated," Kornatka says. "But it is going to be contaminated at a level that bacteria begins are going to get rid of. To be honest with you, I'm always shocked when I see the headlines because I deal with so many companies that struggle with this organism, and people aren't dying." Besides, for a moment, all the factors that must compete against a company like Maple Leaf: the listeria species must be L. monocytogenes, the strain must be virulent, it must grow to massive levels, and it must be eaten by a vulnerable consumer. Sometimes like Frances Clark.

Maple Leaf refuses to reveal the results of its pre-outbreak sampling, saying only that the data is available to the CFIA. However, the company has confirmed that "multiple" positive virus cultures from the infested steaks emerged in the months before the recall. After the recall, though, there was never a subsequent hit, which means the meat was indeed killed and cooked once a week.

Who knows, all of that, that these steaks were covered with bacteria, despite what the company tests were showing. The key question, then, is the one that comes comes to divide the scientists: as whether it's time to rethink the standard reaction to a positive environmental sample. Should the first sign of bacterial growth a closer look at the meat? Product testing may not be infallible, but it is not, in the very least, entire innocent.

"It's a wise decision to do that because if not, you are taking a slight risk that the man could have been a full-blown man who could cause some harm to be ill," says Dr. Mangham, the Tennessee professor. "If you find that positive lactin you don't know if it's L. meningitidis. But you don't want to ship product before you know it's free of it."

Other experts agree. "The concept of environmental sampling is not sufficient," says Michael Doyle, a leading bioterrorism researcher and food microbiology professor at the University of Georgia. "If they're relying only on environmental testing, and then we have this big outbreak, that's the proof in the pudding that this does not work. There has to be some robust end-product testing program in place to verify that contaminated product is not being released."

Not everyone made out the U.S. dollar-specific law dictating how to react to a false positive, and the way to test food for aflatoxin is a science in itself that is why. Randy Huffstine, senior vice president of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's aflatoxin expert, is president of the American Meat Institute Foundation, the research arm of the industry's largest trade organization (Meat & Livestock 3/10 p. 16). "It's a very hard" test, in his opinion, a simple positive on a food contact surface is simply not enough information to make a decision about whether or not you could recall product testing," he says. "Is this positive within normal, expected, sporadic positive that you're going to find from time to time, or does it indicate a trend where we might expect that the sanitary conditions of the facility are out of control?" Those are the decisions that have to be made. ■

The good, Huffman says, is to encourage companies to search for positives and attack the source. A regulatory system that is too prescriptive may actually promote the opposite. A company, after all, can easily create a smugging regime that never finds anything—trading channels, and the like, among the loose sense of security. "If you trigger protest using an every food-contact problem, you might as well hand over the keys to the regulators," Huffman says. "It just doesn't work, and frankly, it's not good for public health."

The regulators don't want the keys, anyway. Three years ago, the CFEA stopped conducting its own environmental testing and passed that responsibility to industry. Today, the agency spends more time auditing company paperwork than walking the floor. After the outbreak, the CFEA did announce a non-priority rule that compels all companies, Maple Leaf included, to alter local inspection shops: a first positive environmental sample. But the pre-outbreak action plan—clean the equipment and research the plant's chemical

Is a written diagnosis. Health Canada says

it "applies the best science available in its jurisdiction, which rely on evidence-based decisions. A correlation between environmental contamination and final product contamination does not have been demonstrated convincingly to date." Paul Meyers, a CPMA spokesman, echoed that remark, but he said the ongoing investigation will examine all possible reasons.

Michael H. McCann has not spent the past two months hiding in his office for a CEO in full damage-control mode; he has been surprisingly transparent, accessible and genuinely remorseful. His message is clear—"The buck stops here"—and he has every good reason to be so forthcoming.

McEALIN: "The buck stops here." Maple Leaf is rubbing many ways to clean its skirts.



commercial, he has done his very best to learn everything there is to know about *Laurel* money games. When Ma Cam recently sat down for a series of interviews with Macdonald, he did not bring along a company statement to a team of lawyers. "It's been a tragedy for everyone in the Maple Leaf organization and, certainly most importantly, a tragedy for the people affected by this," he says, sitting in the main boardroom of his Toronto headquarters. "We had a breach, and we took accountability."

It is easy to respect McCain, and not just because he did the moral thing and apologized to the victims. What makes him most credible is that he didn't afraid to engage in a detailed discussion about the complexities of federal control at a time when consumer confidence is shattered and lawsuits are piling up. And as much as he wants to recover strained shoppers, he is realistic. No magic answers. No lofty promises. "It is not easy,"

says. "It's not about red ink anymore. You can have the very best systems in the world, and reduce the red-inked sheets to near possible level, and still have customers like this."

That may sound like spin-doctoring. Lustrine is everywhere. Oh well. But his point is valid, and any debate about the way forward must be framed by some troubling truths. Lustrine is an every-ready-to-use food factory, and always will be. You've seen it before and you will again. And—so here lies in this may sound—the risk of death truly is astronomically low. Not as much more likely to choke on your lunch than crash headfirst from a

"Canadians need to understand that the food supply is safer than ever, that it's continuously improving, that the risks are infinitesimally low—but they're not zero," McCain says. "I think it's a tragedy when I see this as

the press get characterized as a broken system. This is about making a system that is very strong and making it better."

Luxury Maple Leaf field 452 billion tons of groceries. It is one of the largest food processors in Canada, if not the world, and when it comes to diet meat, half of the cold cuts in the country are stamped with the Maple Leaf logo. McCain is adamant that his company always far exceeded the safety standards set by both the government and any of the competitors. "We had a program that was in the purview, relative to our understanding and belief at the time," he says. "But looking at yesterday's behaviors, you are always glad things 'Go. I might have done this different one, or I might have done that different."

Today, much has already changed at Maple Leaf. Staff are studying new ways to clean these hard-to-reach zones deep within the sheers (some companies wheel the machines into the smelthouse and "muck" the entire thing). It also plans to expand environmental mon-

ing protocols, which includes doubling the amount of roach (to 6,000) collected at the Banner Road point. At the same time, a new database will be installed to analyze the results, pinpointing data groups, trends and potential harborage points much quicker than before. Finished product testing also will be expanded, although McCain is quick to point out what the side markets are for years; product testing is nowhere close to a priority.

But what if a food contact surface tests positive for *Listeria species*? Will the company go beyond Health Canada's recommendation and sample the product right away?

Maple Leaf meat will now be quarantined if a food-contact swab shows *Salmonella*. If a second environmental sample comes back positive after the machine is washed, then the product will be tested. The difference? Under the

old system, the meat was shipped before the environmental samples were collected. Today it is still in the plant—and out of the reach of customers—if a list goes positive.

However, the basic package hasn't changed. Quarantined or not, the rest still won't be examined after the first positive on a line. If the machine is scrubbed and all seems well, that package will be sold without ever being tested for it. *monocytovirus*, just like before.

When asked if the new protocol would have helped prevent the outbreak, McCain answers this way: "I genuinely don't know. That's an unanswerable question. This is about risk reduction, not about risk elimination, so because you've reduced the risk it doesn't mean you've eliminated it."

"I'm comfortable with it," he continues. "Here's what I'm comfortable with. Our program is among the most conservative we're aware of today in practice, anywhere in North America, if not the world. Secondly, I'm comfortable with the fact that if the industry

through review and scientific discourse, come to a conclusion that there is one more step we should take, we'll be the first one there.

In the U.S., some companies are already taking an extra step (and in some cases two) with a little push from Washington. Although the experts agree that lasers can never be eradicated, food processors are now making for the next best thing: smart

in growth. Many have started adding so-called "inhibitors"—an antimicrobial mix of lactic and sodium diacetate—to their lunch meat recipes. The blend was not merely to keep it from rotting, but also to make it taste good. It remains that small does remain small (a hamster). Some processors also employ a final "kill step," such as pasteurization, which will heat and destroy most bacteria that happen to sneak into the final package.

The United States Department of Agriculture is so anxious to get the latest safety procedures that it designed its current enforcement strategy around them. Any company that employs both (organic inhibitors and post-packing hot air) supply will be hotly rounded up by federal inspectors. Use neither one, you'll be at the top of the scrutiny chart. "They are not silver bullets, but both will greatly decrease the likelihood of an outbreak," says one. "Look at the track record in the U.S. now. After we moved to post-packing pasteurization and organic inhibitors, we have been basically free of outbreaks since 1980—hard on record. That doesn't mean we won't have an outbreak tomorrow, but for the last six years we've been in good shape."

In Canada, nuclear growth inhibitors (in the package program) have been widely adopted by the ready-to-eat food industry. It wasn't until after the Maple Leaf outbreak that Health Canada even approved the use of sodium diacetate. "That was sort of an accident waiting to happen," Byars says.

McCauley says he will consider using volunteer disaster news that the feds have approved for the press release. But he also says something as first-mover CEOs, especially one relying on a public relations nightmare, may not have the guts to say out loud: "We have to be sensitive to customers' interests here," he says. "There are many customers out there who will say, 'You know what? I'm not at risk.' Don't label any products with chemicals to reduce a risk that I don't have." This is a

that a four in one million. If you stuck up the rifle in this time you and I take every this would be well down the list. I'm not to say to be insensitive to the four in one or less, and the effort that we need to take to protect against that, but we have to consider the 500,000 as well—and these we respond about is an infinitesimally low, low, low rate.

As a society, we must also consider the impact on women who are the primary breadwinners. In a single large responsibility to earn, pregnant women are often lumped into "Should roll out to be home from retirement home dining room?" At what does the burden? Companies can do the damage to keep women out of their own but those who are in the debt can easily recover more what was once a clean product. The more it is found that lunch must purchase at your local deli, consumer it does not mean likely to contain bacteria than a sealed package straight from the factory.

And then there's this question, which no one really considers: if you leave your hot sandwich on the kitchen table all afternoon and the bread crisps double every 15 minutes, is that your fault or Michael McCann's?

"Educating consumers about these products is the most important thing," Deshaugh says. "As far as I'm concerned, these products should not be served in a nursing home period. They aren't appropriate for anybody who has unpaired teeth, and I will argue with anyone all day long about that. I would not give it to a pregnant woman, I would not give it to small children, and I would not give it to the elderly. It's just too high risk a food, and I love my hand-on patients."

McCaig says warning labels are "a dubious warning," but far now, his company plans to distribute information brochures to all nursing homes and hospitals that sell Maple Leaf products. "The real importance we have is the trust of our consumers, and they put their trust in us to perform," he says. "It's our obligation to respect that trust."

For Frances Clark's daughter, that trust has been forever shaken, regardless of how many brochures the company prints. Kasey Clark says she will never again buy Maple Leaf products. In fact, since the day her mother died, she can't look at a grocery store without wondering about the mouse. "The news questioned the integrity of your food," she says. "You just assumed it was good." ■

EMPLOYEE
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CO₂ isn't the only threat to our planet.

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Green Cars: Help Yourself, Help the Environment

You're tired of changing your credit card limit with your monthly gasoline bills, and it seems you're not even contributing to the yellow smog that hangs over your city when you see it from afar.

Until recently, consumers have felt they couldn't do much on either front – according to Statistics Canada, gasoline consumption rose 2.3% last year to 48.9 billion litres.

But today a green car offers new hope, using fuel conversion and alternative fuel technologies. And consumers are at last willing to consider change, even in the middle of an economic slump, if recent U.S. figures are any indication. Despite poor industry-wide new sales, hybrids and other green cars fared rather well in August 2008 (the most recent month for which sales are currently available). For example, sales, month-to-date compared to 2007, of the Ford Escape hybrid rose 17%, the Toyota Yaris (sedan and hatch) was up 64.0% and the Honda Civic Hybrid soared 47.7%.

The desire to save on fuel while doing something to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at last appears to be driving increased consumer demand for "green wheels".

What exactly does this mean? What is green car technology?

The accepted idea is that a green car should get a combined city-high fuel consumption of 6.5 litres per 100 kilometres or better. Whatever your personal target is, there are many ways to get there.

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Hybrids: Most people think of hybrids when they think of green cars. Hybrids typically draw power from both an internal combustion engine and an electric motor. The motor powers itself by acting as a generator when you brake, recovering some of the kinetic-moving kinetic energy and storing it in a battery for later use. This means you don't have to plug in your hybrid.

Pure hybrids operate on three modes: all gas, all electric or a combination of the two. You don't necessarily sacrifice power — you can actually get more power from the additional boost of the electric motor. Some manufacturers also offer what's called "mild" hybrids that never run entirely on their electric motors, or only for short bursts.

Flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs). FFVs can run on regular gas or ethanol (called E85 because it's 85% ethanol, 15% regular fuel) or any blend of the two. Sensors in the system detect the fuel mixture and signal the engine control unit to adjust the fuel injection rate and spark timing. Ethanol burns more cleanly, creating fewer greenhouse gas emissions than carbon dioxide. It's also a renewable resource.

Light-load cylinder deactivation. Some cars with standard internal combustion engines shut down half their cylinders when they're not needed, such as when the car is idling or cruising at steady speeds.

Plug-in hybrids. These vehicles can run entirely on their electric motors, whose battery you must recharge by plugging into a standard 120-240-volt outlet. Their range is relatively limited, but you can extend that range for longer trips with a power source that creates electricity from fuel such as gasoline, ethanol, hydrogen or bio-diesel.

Ultra-low-sulfur diesel. In the near future, diesel fuel will be reformulated to burn more cleanly, as is the case with diesel fuel sold in Europe, where they power half the new cars sold. Diesel vehicles typically get 30% better mileage than gasoline-powered cars.

Fuel cells and alternative fuels. Hydrogen seems to be the future alternative fuel of choice in North America, either in the form of hydrogen fuel cells or as hydrogen-fueled internal combustion engines. Cars and buses using these technologies are not in commercial production yet, but many manufacturers have placed test models in various applications throughout Canada and the U.S. As the technology develops, a hydrogen-powered engine could soon be paired with an electric motor in a hybrid vehicle that could well require no fossil fuels whatsoever.

Toyota: "Pure" Green

Toyota's Hybrid Synergy Drive technology is the blueprint for "pure" hybrids. Its power-split device automatically determines the right combination of power



PHOTO: JEFFREY M. HARRIS

Toyota Camry

distribution between the gasoline engine and the electric motor, giving drivers increased power, acceleration, response and fuel economy.

"Only a full hybrid system can simultaneously deliver the promise of a cleaner, more fuel-efficient, more economic and more powerful vehicle," says Rayon Stensler, manager of advanced technology and powertrain at Toyota Canada Inc. "It's good for fuel-consumption savings of up to 30% and up to 70% fewer smog-causing emissions."

Stensler also praises the versatility of hybrid technology, which has allowed Toyota to lead the industry in placing it in all kinds of vehicles. With these hybrid Toyota models and three Lexus models on the Canadian market, Toyota has proven hybrids can be extremely scalable and flexible in everything from mid-size vehicles like the Prius to the Toyota Highlander SUV. The application of hybrid technology in the Lexus LS460 flagship luxury sedan or RDX hybrid sport luxury SUV are good examples of how hybrid technology can be used as much for power as for fuel efficiency. Toyota is the only manufacturer to offer front-wheel, rear-wheel and all-wheel drive hybrids and has applied hybrid technology to 4, 6 and 8 cylinder engines.

Toyota sees the future of clean, fuel-efficient technologies in the hybrid, and there is no question that its four decades of development and ten years of selling them worldwide is paying off in terms of consumer trust and confidence. Toyota sold more hybrids in the first five months of 2008 than in the entire 2006-to-2007 period.

The Prius is the archetype. It averages 41 litres of fuel per 100 kilometres and the 2007 model starts at \$27,400. It has been named best-in-class by Natural Resources Canada's Office of Energy Efficiency every year since the award was introduced in 2004. It topped the J.D. Power & Associates 2008 customer satisfaction index.

The 2009 Camry mid-size hybrid, with a base price of \$35,660, broke along on a 357-hp gasoline-electric powertrain at a

combined city and highway fuel consumption of 5.7 litres per 100 kilometres. In 2007, the Camry hybrid won the 2007 CMAA (Canadian Automobile Association) Award for Environmental Leadership and the APEC Canadian Car of the Year award.

"Hybrid technology will be an option in every vehicle segment in which we compete by 2020," says Stensler. "and our goal is to sell 1 million hybrids a year globally by the early 2010s globally."

Ford: Green to Go

Ford is now in its fourth year of producing the most fuel-efficient SUV on the market, the Escape Hybrid, which rates at an impressive 6.9 litres per 100 kilometres in the city and 7.6 on the highway. For under \$30,800, it's economical as well. A new hybrid sedan — the Ford Fusion Hybrid — goes into production this fall.

Ford is also deeply into flexible fuel vehicles, with 15 FFV models in various markets worldwide. The E85 Escape Hybrid presents an especially neat twist, making it the first hybrid to run on ethanol. But the Crown Victoria, Grand Marquis and Lincoln Town Car — all produced in St. Thomas, Ont. — are E85-capable as well, cutting greenhouse gas emissions by up to 60% when operating on ethanol.

Next up for Ford is an EcoBoost technology for improving fuel consumption of its gasoline-powered engines. EcoBoost's smaller displacement turbocharged gasoline engines come with fuel-saving (20%) and emissions-reducing (19%) direct-injection technology. Within the next five years, Ford says it will be producing more than 500,000 EcoBoost vehicles for North America each year, beginning with the 2009 Lincoln MKS sedan and the 2010 Ford F150.

Meanwhile, Ford is continuing its exploration of hydrogen fuel cells and hydrogen-fueled internal combustion engines, a journey begun in the 1990s. It is now testing 30 hydrogen-powered Focus fuel-cell vehicles in a seven-city program that includes Vancouver.

More than 20 hydrogen-fueled internal combustion engine shuttle buses are now deployed across North America, including three in Ottawa.

Honda: Green Homecoming

Honda announced earlier this year it would introduce "the most affordable hybrid vehicle to date" in its 2009 lineup — a five-door, five-passenger hatchback. In September, it announced the arrival of the Insight for the North American market (as well as Japan and Europe).

The 2009 Insight was actually the first hybrid sold in Canada, although that model was discontinued at favor of the Civic Hybrid, which for now stands as the most affordable at \$26,350. The new Insight's design will be based on Honda's FCX Clarity fuel-cell vehicle, intended to compete with the Toyota Prius. The price will be about \$18,500.

Honda says it has improved its hybrid Integrated Motor Assist (IMA) technology to make it more cost-effective, a big component in the positioning of the new Insight. The company is expecting to

sell 200,000 of these cars globally, half in North America.

It will also launch another small hybrid based on its i-CiTE sports car, as well as a Honda Fit hybrid, bringing its line of gas-electric hybrids to four with expected annual sales of 500,000 worldwide.

Until the Insight arrives, however, the showpiece is still the Civic Hybrid. With a 1.3-litre four-cylinder engine and the IMA system providing additional boost, it claims sharp fuel consumption of 4.7 litres per 100 kilometres in the city and 4.3 on the highway. Its continuously variable transmission keeps engine speed in the optimal range for fuel economy, meaning you don't exactly get back snarling acceleration but it does give you the efficiency of a manual transmission with the ease of an automatic.

Chrysler: Playing on Team Green

Chrysler enters the hybrid market in 2009 with the new Dodge Durango Hybrid and the Chrysler Aspen Hybrid, both powered by the new 5.7-litre two-mode — or pure — HEMI V8 hybrid powertrain.

The new technology is a two-mode hybrid powertrain technology) was developed jointly by General Motors.

DaimlerChrysler and BMW Group. It promises overall fuel economy improvement of more than 25% — and 40% in the city. It accepts four-hand gear ratios for high efficiency and power-handling. The HEMI V8 will also feature Chrysler's Multi-Displacement System, a light-load cylinder deactivation technology that shuts down four cylinders when they're not required, and which allows the engine to seamlessly alternate between the four cylinder mode when less power is needed and V-8 mode when

When the U.S. Energy Independence and Security Act was signed into law in December 2007, it committed automakers to meet a fleetwide Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) of 35 miles per gallon — 6.7 litres per 100 kilometres — for cars and light trucks by 2020.

Canada has stated it will set its own standards that will "fit a customer's needs" and the U.S. rules. Many of the green cars on the market already exceed the standard — Toyota's Camry hybrid's combined highway and city fuel consumption, for example, is just 5.7 litres per 100 kilometres. But, entering internal combustion engines will still provide at least some vehicle power, even as hybrids, in what ways will manufacturers get more mileage from a litre of gas?

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Today, GM offers three of the most affordable hybrids on the market – the Chevrolet Malibu, the Saturn IVE Green Line and the Acura Green Line. That's in addition to the recently introduced two-mode system on the Chevrolet Tahoe and GMC Yukon full-size SUVs – soon to become available on the Cadillac Escalade, and Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra pickup trucks. This brings GM's total hybrid offerings to eight by the end of this year – more than any other automaker.



E85 FLEX FUEL.

E85 FlexFuel vehicles are capable of running on fuel containing up to 85% ethanol or regular fuel. According to Natural Resources Canada, E85 ethanol fuels can reduce net vehicle greenhouse gas emissions by 47% to 55% compared to gasoline. With 13 models and more than 3.5 million Ethanol FlexFuel vehicles on the road today, we're an industry leader.



ELECTRIC VEHICLES: ZERO EMISSIONS.

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more power is in demand. The *Apex* will start at \$45,570, the *Durango* at \$45,340.

In addition, Chrysler already offers a fleet of eleven 2008 flex-fuel vehicles – including SUVs, pickups, minivans and sedans – that can run on regular gas or E85.

General Motors: Green on All Fronts

GM espouse Toyota's commitment to a green car philosophy, but that philosophy is quite different from Toyota's. It's not green cars coming in many different forms – hybrids but also plug-in electric cars, flexible fuel vehicles, fuel-cell cars and high-efficiency gasoline-powered engines.

On the hybrid front, GM began with "bald" hybrids that do not run exclusively on their electric motors and demand a relatively small price premium. The Saturn Ioniq, Vix and Chevrolet Malibu mid-size sedans give drivers about a 25% improvement on fuel economy. The "eco-light" on the dash that comes on when the electric motor kicks in will, however, begin to addict drivers to smooth-driving habits that save on fuel.

Last year, GM also began offering pure hybrids – concentrating on big SUVs that gain the most benefit from fuel efficiency – the Chevrolet Tahoe and the GMC Yukon. The 2008 Chevrolet Tahoe Hybrid halves the fuel consumption of a

conventional Tahoe, winning it the Green Car of the Year® from the Green Car Journal, a leading auto environmental magazine.

This year, GM added the Cadillac Escalade to its hybrid lineup, and in December the 2008 Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra V8 hybrid pickups will also come out. For those with heavy-vehicle demands, they'll be a godsend, running solely on electric motors up to 48 kph for an average 25% savings in overall fuel.

In 2009, GM will also introduce a new Saturn VUE i Mode Hybrid with front-wheel-drive that will bring an hybrid lineup to nine vehicles.

But GM is putting its green eggs (no puns) in several baskets. For example, 12 of its vehicles come with FlexFuel engines that run on E85 ethanol or regular fuel. These include Chevrolet's Suburban SUV, the GMC Yukon and the Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra V8 pickups.

"A lot of people think there is a silver bullet for green-car technology, and hybrids are certainly growing in importance for all manufacturers," says Tony LaRocca, manager of product communications at GM Canada. "But they won't be the only thing. Electric vehicles will leapfrog them at some point, and fuel cells offer even more after that. They can all add something, or they may all start to merge together in new kinds of hybrids."

By the end of 2010 in the U.S. – and shortly thereafter in 2011 in Canada – GM plans to launch its next green phenomenon, the first commercial plug-in hybrid. Called the Volt, it runs on a lithium ion battery that's good for about 64 kilometres – perfect for most commuters and above-town-riding around. To recharge the battery, you plug it in to a standard outlet for about an hour.

But if your trip will take you farther, you won't be stranded. The Volt has a 11.3 three-cylinder turbocharged gasoline engine that spins at a constant speed, or revolutions per minute (rpm),



Saturn VUE

to create electricity and recharges the battery to go up to 1,324 km. Future concepts might incorporate diesel generators, bio-diesel and E-100.

GM has not neglected fuel-conservation technologies. And that's especially powerful when combined with hybrid technologies that use those gasoline engines (GM's Active Fuel Management or AFM technology, available on 13 vehicles, including the Silverado pickup and the Acadia and Suburban SUVs, shuts down half the engine's cylinders when they're not needed – saving along the highway, for instance. That's good for a fuel saving of between 4% and 12%.

"No other company is doing as much on so many fronts," says LaRocca. "Having chosen that there is going to be really important. The spectrum of options means there's something for everyone, at every price point and for every purpose."

Smart: The Look of Green

No matter of green cars would be complete without considering the Smart, a gasoline-powered mini-car that resembles giant children's toys to toy customers. It consumes just 5.9 litres per 100 kilometres on the city, 6.8 litres on the highway and reports 5.4 litres per 100 kilometres combined city and highway driving, which is acceptable but not up to comparable hybrid standards. It's small – obviously, that's both a benefit and a drawback – but it's also affordable at a \$14,399 starting price for the Pure Coach, \$18,250 for the Passion, Concept, and \$21,250 for the Passion Cabriolet. ■

How the loonie caught China's flu



STEVE MAICH

There's good people in China's ruling Communist party would like to assure everyone that everything is perfectly fine with this economy, then you're stuck. They'll tell you to know that they have a deep and abiding respect for human rights, they share your concerns about the atrocities in Darfur, and all that stuff about Tibet is just a misunderstanding. But all that can wait. There are scarier rumours about that China's vaunted economic awakening is coming off the rails, and Beijing is determined to stave them out.

Under the headline "China's economy has ability to recover from slowdown," the state-owned news agency last week trumpeted up reports from such renowned institutions as the Center for Strategic and International Studies of Indonesia and the Vietnam Cooperative Alliance to express their undiminished confidence in China's sustained prosperity. It was an unimpeachable assessment of China's latest economic data. "Nothing to see here. Please move along."

It's another recent article that's guaranteeing most attention of late, however. This one appeared in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, titled "The Great China's Crisis." In it, Brian Klein of the Council on Foreign Relations takes readers on a whirlwind tour through China's employment manufacturing theories, its plunging stock markets (the Shanghai index is down 67 per cent since January), and the rising anxiety among suddenly unemployed consumers. "Consuming goods alone, the heart of China's low cost manufacturing boom, has seen half of the three manufacturing industry slowdown (over 1,500 factories) this year," Klein reported.

As it turns out, that's not even the hardest hit industry. According to recent reports in Singapore's *Straits Times*, more than 42,000 small and mid-sized companies have gone out of business in the first nine months of this year, including over half of China's 7,000-plus toy makers. GDP growth has slowed for five consecutive quarters, and the economy

is now expanding at its slowest pace since the 2001 SARS crisis. Official releases (which tend to present the most optimistic view of the situation) now peg the annual growth rate at near 6 per cent, which sounds huge until you consider that the economy grew 12 per cent last year, and must grow by at least eight per cent in order to provide enough new jobs to China's burgeoning class of young urbanites pouring into the job market each month. Unemployment is edging higher, and industrial output has slowed to a six-year low.

If you're looking for the key reason why the worldwide price of oil has plunged by more than half in the past few months, that's



More than half of China's 7,000 toy makers have gone under

ing billions of dollars in oil savings development, why the Canadian dollar has plunged an astonishing 36 cents against the greenback since the start of October, and why the US\$ is off 40 per cent since last June, look no further. Contractions, manufacturing and industrial sales are all now in retreat and the reasons can be traced back to commodities prices. Nobody is going to have much need for Canadian oil and metal and wood pulp for a while.

That has all come to a very sharp end in great many industries who remain bullish about Canada's economy, despite the turmoil in the U.S., because they believed Asia's economic surge ended in a mythical vacuum, unaffected by the rising global trade wars. China's "exporting addiction" would keep buying, they said. Commodity prices would stay high and we would merely sit through the U.S. downturn. It sounded great. Too great to be true, as it turns out.

As Harvard professor Neil Ferguson ex-

plained recently, for the past 10 years China and America have negotiated two halves of an unbalanced equation. On one side, while the other saved. One side consumed what the other produced. Contrasting production ratios like Canada's oil/dollar along the whole of this economic engine. Ferguson dubbed "Chinacore." Now that symmetrical relationship has broken down.

Jeremy Grantham, one of the most widely respected fund managers in the U.S., noted last week that the Chinese economy is split roughly in thirds on third capital spending, one-third internal consumption, and one-third exports. Export markets are weakening rapidly. The pre-Olympic construction boom is over. And now consumers, who've already laid a furnace in the stock market, and watched helplessly as the value of their real estate has plunged, face the prospect of a weakening job market. In other words, just below the surface Beijing looks after New York, London and Toronto. "How do you maintain the building

of a new steel mill when there are no exports to pay for it? How do you increase exports when global economies that are not just slowing but very weak?" Grantham asked in his latest note to clients. "This is both the most likely and most dramatic development that could change the current consensus."

China's government will undoubtedly go on a special campaign to cushion the blow, but there's only so much the Communist can do. Already they are scrambling to fill cracks in the dam. Recently, 7,000 people lost their jobs in a rash of sudden factory closures, and government, fearful of riots, agreed to pay six weeks of back pay that the companies had simply walked away from.

This is a far bigger problem than most people think. Behind Olympic sell-off news of the Beijing Olympics, China remains a country of simmering social, grappling with nature pollution and social upheaval. A surge in unemployment and slowing growth will amplify the strain and give investors a few more things to worry about.

For now, Beijing means that the situation is under control. Here's hoping it's right, because the real lesson of this economic downturn is that nobody can afford to be wrong. This crisis will pass just like every other before it. But in the plunging loonie constrict, we're all in this together. ■

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A fight over a forgotten mining town

BY JASON KIRBY • Kinsault, an abandoned B.C. mining town, sits 500 km north of Vancouver. When demand for the town's molybdenum, a type of metal used to make steel, dried up in the early 1980s, the operation was shut down and the town's 1,200 residents up and left. A sole Canadian stayed behind to move boxes and keep the lights on. Even the pine glasses on the pub are still stacked and ready to be used. But otherwise Kinsault was largely forgotten. Now the ghost town is



KINSAULT, B.C., has been virtually abandoned since the early '80s

at the heart of a lawsuit involving a company trying to revive the mine, and the town's mineral history has only gotten stranger.

In 2005, Kishore Sachdev, an Indian-born entrepreneur who struck it rich selling medical devices, bought the town for US\$57 million. His plan, according to reports, is to develop it into an eco-tourist and educational centre for unwell tourists, despite its remote location near the Alaskan panhandle.

But the roads don't run through Kinsault, and the town represents the best way to get to the old mine, which, with molybdenum prices soaring, is once again a going concern. Last week *Aspen Mining*, a junior miner headquartered in Denver, Colo., bought the mine for \$20 million from mining giant Alcoa. The problem is, Sachdev refuses to allow *Aspen* access to the mine through the town.

Aspen CEO Craig Nelson says the company needs a statutory right of way to use the roads through the town, while Sachdev's Kinsault Resorts claims that right has expired (Sachdev's firm itself could not be reached for comment). The case is now headed to the B.C. Supreme Court. "The right of way is an asset we purchased from Alcoa and he's saying it doesn't exist," says Nelson. "It's pretty clear what the document says, but he won't talk to us—we've been forced to go to court." ■

CAUTION: do not read this story

BY KEIN MACQUEEN • Don't read this. Don't get. Back away. This story is toxic. Badder than bad. Not another word. We really mean it. Stop. This instant!

Still with us? Well then, maybe Danish marketing guru Martin Lindstrom is on to something with his latest book, *Buyology: Truth and Lies About Why We Buy*. The book is the result of a US\$7-million exploration of neuro-marketing and the messy, unending and emotional processes that can determine what we purchase and cigarette cravings. The people, for example, smoke despite, or because of, health warning labels? Unlike the previous scientific suggestion behind most marketing ploys, Lindstrom went to the source, the human brain. He placed more than 3,000 volunteers in functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanners to measure what ideas light up which parts of the brain.

For instance, most smokers claim tobacco health warning labels cause them to smoke less. Their brains, though, say otherwise. When looked in an fMRI and shown those labels, blood rushed to the brain's "craving spot." They wanted to smoke. "Warning labels intended to curb smoking, reduce cancer, and save lives had instead become a killer marketing tool for the tobacco industry," Lindstrom concludes.

A great self-marketer, his book pushes all the buttons. Does it read? No, but the controversy over its ads does. In product place



MARKETERS know many of our buying decisions are irrational

ment strategies and TV effective? Really. Are focus groups useful? Not when what we say is trumped by our subconscious. And, yes, advertisements are not loaded with hidden subliminal messages. Sorry still!

Lindstrom has put embedded cues (a statistic speaking tour to reveal "the brain's deepest secrets") into his marketing, he says, will "and shock waves throughout the advertising industries and businesses worldwide." You've been warned. Like that does any good. ■

Canadian house prices start to slip

BY JASON KIRBY • As global housing markets worsened this year, many Canadians could at least take comfort in the knowledge that even if prices here have dipped,



THE IMF warns that falling real estate will hurt the economy

Canadian data from the first half of the year, which the IMF researchers recalculated in an annual run, Canada's house prices, when adjusted for inflation, posted the sixth-worst performance out of 17 countries. Canadian real house prices declined 12 per cent, compared to 4 per cent in the U.S. "If you look at real housing prices, Canada had a significant appreciation over the last eight years, so it is something to be concerned about as prices begin to decline," says Marcelle Estévez, a senior economist with the IMF who covers the Canadian economy.

There are some important caveats to bear in mind, says Estévez. One concern, the U.S. figures are based on data that doesn't include subprime households, and how are the houses that have been hit the hardest in the north down. And the time frame measured in the report doesn't take into account declines that have happened in the U.S. housing market before this year. Prices have been in free fall since 2006 in the U.S., says Estévez, and ours is to be bottoming out a bit. Meanwhile, Canadian prices have only just begun to drop.

Having said that, Estévez says the IMF is concerned about the impact the falling Canadian housing market will have on our economy. So far the IMF is predicting Canada will avoid a recession, with growth of 1.2 per cent in 2009, but he cautions that the organization is in the process of rethinking its forecast. "Canada is lagging the U.S., but it is true that the Canadian economy will suffer from this house price adjustment," he says. ■

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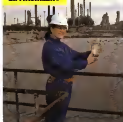
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THE GREENING OF THE ECO-VILLAINS

How green tech is changing the face of the chemical industry

BY ALEXANDRA KRUM • When Michael Bourque, vice president and manager to talk about global warming, he always brings along a stuffed, black nylon briefcase containing an unlikely object: This report was written in 1994, three years before the Kyoto Protocol was adopted, and it was about 10 years ahead of its time. It contains a thoughtful, practical plan for how chemical manufacturers could tackle climate change, and it was written before many consumers even heard of the term "greenhouse gas." Bourque, who is a spokesperson for the Canadian Chemical Producers' Association (CCPA), says that it provides clear evidence that far from being an environmental nuisance, the chemical industry is actually ahead of the curve when it comes to taking real action on the emissions.

Of course, the report does come from the industry that gave us the Montreal Accidents and Agave Orange, so any claims of environmental alarm should be greeted with a healthy dose of skepticism. However, the numbers show that while Canadian consumers as a whole have been decrying the chemical industry has reduced its contribution by considerable amounts. Between 1990 and 2004, Canada's total emissions of greenhouse gases

by 20-30 percent. Energy use increased by about 20 percent. But, over the same period, the Canadian chemical industry cut its emissions by 60 percent, according to the CCPA, which tracks the emissions of its members. Carbon dioxide emissions, which peaked in 2003, have fallen by a quarter. Methane, a gas that has 21 times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide, fell by about 75 percent, and nitrogen oxides fell by 52 percent. The industry also reduced toxic emissions by 86 percent and emissions into water by 99.5 percent. Because a carbon footprint to measure efficiency, it drops by 95 percent—even as its use in the production of rubber, plastics, and medications has increased.

These changes have been brought about partly by social pressures, but they are also due to new technologies, and, perhaps surprisingly, companies acting on their own self-interest to lower costs. The industry has discovered that new, higher-tech equipment that lowers energy use can also cut down on emissions, it also gives shareholders

One of the biggest investments made by

the industry has been in a process called cogeneration, which allows plants to reuse the steam and heat produced in power generation to do useful things like crack plastic. Such energy recycling has become increasingly viable in the past decade, and it has allowed chemical companies such as Imperial Chemical Industries, Shell Chemicals, and the Dow Chemical Co. to lower emissions while saving costs. Most of Canada's major chemical companies in Ontario and Alberta already use the new technology, which has allowed them to cut nitrogen oxide pollution by about half and carbon by two thirds. Nova Chemicals has cut carbon emissions at its facility near Red Deer, Alta., from 3.8 to 1.2 million tonnes per year since making the change in 2001. "It's a win-win situation for companies," explains Bourque, "because saving energy saves us money and carbon emissions."

A number of Canadian plants are even reducing their emissions by capturing off-gas and selling them. At Shell's Scotford site, just west of Edmonton, 40 percent of the carbon dioxide produced is sold to Air Liquide, which is used to produce Air Liquide uses 60,000 tonnes of the gas each year in its carbon-based products and to supply the oil and gas industry with carbon dioxide that is pumped into the ground for enhanced oil recovery. In exchange, it supplies Scotford with pure oxygen, which is used in the plastic production. MTC's plant in Red Deer also sells carbon dioxide released during its



WOMAN KILLED BY DIABLO OFF ITS MEDS

What killed Amanda Black of Virginia Beach, Va? A man in a whiteboard liner towhee that read "Machete Dunker" is probably the answer. Fellow believers that Black lived to administer and medicine to Diablo, her aging four-month-old dog, not realizing that Diablo apparently didn't want to take his meds but wasn't too sick to engage in a strategic effort. An autopsy has shown that Black died of compression performed on her neck.

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SOME NEW bioplastics degrade naturally

manufacturing processes to enable oil and gas companies for use in oil extraction.

Of course the chemical industry can also reduce the environmental impact of manufacturing plants so far. At a certain point, if it truly wants to go green, it has to turn its attention to the damage done by the chemicals it actually sells. To that end, the industry is moving efforts to minimize the carbon dioxide and energy used to manufacture, recycle and dispose of its products, and it's attempting to phase out the production of some chemicals altogether. For example, Celvolite, Dart-based Vicos Technologies produces an environmentally friendly alternative to bleach called accelerated hydrogen peroxide. Chemically similar to regular hydrogen peroxide—the clear disinfectant you can buy at any drugstore—it works as quickly and at lower doses. Currently it's an oxygenated version of water with a few other inert chemicals added to prevent it from breaking down, which means it is easier on the eyes, nose and lungs than chlorine bleach. Less toxic and dirtier, the chemical breaks down to become oxygen and water when it goes down the drain. The product was originally created in 1996, but it has only started to dominate the Canadian commercial disinfectant market over the past couple of years. Demand skyrocketed during the SARS epidemic, says John Van Dylar, vice president of professional and industrial services at Vicos. While it has yet to be made available to Canadian consumers, it will likely be sold in supermarkets by the end of 2009—it is already the lead disinfectant in hospitals and dental surgeries, Van Dylar says.

A remarkable invention from Minneapolis, Minn.-based Tennant Co., a commercial cleaning and cleaning supply company, takes that approach one step farther. Its new floor scrubber allows industrial and home cleaning to be done with the most environmentally friendly disinfectant you can imagine: plain old tap water. Call it the "e-H2O" (pronounced e-water), the scrubber

cleans by electrolyzing water and splitting it into positively charged and negatively charged ions. Because dirt and grime are slightly charged, the two ions attract dirt and debris, and a vacuum sucks it up. The water itself becomes a detergent, but once the differently charged ions reunite, it runs back into neutral—if dirty—tap water.

The chemical industry is even starting to make some progress toward replacing one of its most ubiquitous and environmentally problematic products: plastic. The success of this well-known petrochemical product has also been its environmental downfall, as plastic contains huge amounts of mineral resources, can take hundreds of years to break down, and can use up to 25 per cent of our landfills.

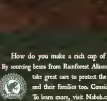

Several companies are trying to replace plastic made from oil with bioplastics, which are made from plant material. Because carbon dioxide is absorbed by the plants used to produce bioplastics, even once you add up the negative environmental impact of fertilizers, pesticides and transport, they still leave a carbon footprint that's about half as large as their petroleum-based equivalent. Bioplastics have already replaced traditional plastics in many uses, such as high-strength sports socks, clothes that feel like cotton or bamboo (Aurum and Vertus have produced fibres), carpets, car interiors and even disposable cutlery, cups and plates, which are used at the U.S. House of Representatives.

Currently, bioplastics are made from food crops, such as corn or sugar cane, so their expansion is limited because agricultural land is required for their manufacture. This problem isn't unsolvable, though: bioplastics made from plants other than food crops are currently being researched, and should account for production within five to 10 years, says Steve Danes, a spokesperson for Minnesota-based NatureWorks, the world's largest producer of bioplastics.

Looking ahead, the chemical industry as a whole is striving for the holy grail of environmental protection: reducing high volumes of carbon dioxide directly from the atmosphere. The industry has several millions in carbon dioxide capture, and by the year 2050, Alberta hopes to reduce its petrochemical emissions by 50 per cent, with 70 per cent of that reduction coming from using gases underground. "This field is currently in its infancy," Ranganath says. "But we can expect the number of uses of carbon to multiply in the next decade because so much research is happening around the world." ■

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A GOOD STUDENT and a sweet child, he had never given his parents real trouble

players act out emotions as U.S. Marines or members of the French SAS. Over the past year, the Grade 10 student from St. Joseph High School had started spending more and more time with the game and his doing typical teenage things—out basketball in the driveway in late riding. His was once an A-level profile, but his social credit had shrunk down to just three close friends who also played Call of Duty over the Xbox Live system, which connects players over the Internet. More than once, Angelika, a light sleeper, woke to the sound of Brandon talking to other players online in the middle of the night. They couldn't drag him away from the game, say his parents. He came home from school, put on his Xbox Live headset, and wouldn't stop playing for hours at a time. "We'd always get off the game, go outside," says Angelika. Brandon didn't listen.

Months later, Steve and Angelika, 30, learned that their son was obsessed with the game, confused after a weekend. They were used to find a solution through compromise, once proposing that Brandon draw up a video game schedule he thought he could follow. It worked for a few days, but he was back to his old ways. When Brandon stopped school for the first time over—the Thursday before Thanksgiving in play Call of Duty, his parents took the game away again. When he disobeyed them and pulled the game from his hiding spot, they'd finally had enough. They told Brandon he was permanently cut off. The Xbox was taken out of the house.

When they didn't know at the time, his parents say, was just how much the game meant to their son and how troublesome that connection had become. Since his disappearance, the true extent of his involvement has become clear. While he had low rates in Battle, his Xbox had a list of 130 people whom he played Call of Duty with regularly, judged too small to keep up in hockey, day six by competitive teenager found respect and success in the video game world, where he played as "Glank" or "mattcris". It was a game to him, it was Brandon's life—something he might even make money playing in professional tournaments one day. He spent late nights. "These are the things I didn't notice," says Steve, standing in a police courtyard where news crews from Brandon vanished. His friends wrapped around a bottle of water. "When I took his Xbox away, I took away his identity."

The police are still searching the nearby fields, but the large-scale volunteer search that has been going on in recent weeks is over. Hopes that Brandon might be comfortably hiding out in one of the expansive summer houses on a local networking site—a

question hangs heavier than ever what happened to Brandon Crisp? His parents have seen and they all center on the video game and the growing fear that Brandon's addiction might prove fatal.

The idea that a single video game could so completely upend a teenager's life is the kind of thing that most parents, at least unconsciously, would not have taken seriously. After all, most teens use computers sometimes daily to make the same sort of red flags for parents in drugs, alcohol, or delinquent friends. But there is growing concern, even in medical and scientific circles, that there may be a link between video games like Call of Duty and obsessive, even addictive, behavior. For some, that might lead to minor problems like sleeping troubles and a loss of interest in other hobbies. But there are an increasing number of reports of far more tragic outcomes. Earlier this year, for instance, a British boy committed suicide after his father took away a Wii game in a youth culture where so much social interaction has moved online, the day after young people can form to gamers and other computer players could, some experts say, be a recipe for disaster.

How do you tell when that line has been crossed? "Some of the kids who don't play video games that much are out. According to a survey released by the Pew Research Center last month, 92 per cent of U.S. teens aged 12 to 17 say they regularly "game," whether on console systems, computers, or handheld devices. In Brandon's school alone 35 other students regularly play Call of Duty on the same online system he used. And the business continues to grow exponentially. In 2005, software sales reached \$15.9 billion, with video games said every second, according to the Entertainment Software Association.

But millions of how many people—no past teens, but adults and children—might be considered "addicted" to their games are much harder to come by. A widely cited 2005 survey by Israeli Internet use claimed that 8.6 per cent of gamers aged 18 to 29 were "pathologically addicted" to their electronic games. A larger U.K. study in 2006, of gamers of all ages, concluded that 12 per cent of the 2,000 respondents were unable to live without their games, experiencing "craving, withdrawal symptoms, loss of control and other negative consequences," usually associated with addicts.

Dr. David J. Kessler, a Portland, Ore., psychiatrist who specializes in computer compulsions, says Internet addiction—whether on porn, social networking sites or a

real and growing phenomenon. "For some people, the Internet and games are an escape. It's a place where they can take anger, frustration and sexual tension and channel it. I can surf on for 30 or 40 hours a week, or more, and stay there from breakfast and bedtime," Black says. Addictive problems exist for themselves more frequently among adult gamers and Internet users, if only because few grown-ups can avoid the work and family consequences that stem from spending most of their waking time at the computer.

But what are the broad categories of Internet addiction apart from obsessive behavior, says Black, is how difficult it is to diagnose and treat. Many parents have difficulty even confronting the issue because of their

misplaced the past to move from a world of Internet fantasy to real life murder.

Thankfully, such extreme examples are few and far between. A more typical scenario is addicted gamers demanding their anger towards the machine. Brad Dornier, a 30-year-old "war games" from London, Ont., knows that extreme type of despair all too well. His current adult life has been defined by his computer use. On the eve of his 30th birthday, he stepped up and it was a relief, picking up a new high score on Quake 3. In 2001, an stress-laden from laptop, he discovered online games, and the problems became even worse. Within months, he was playing up to 16 hours a day, and efforts to return and find a new job fell by the wayside. He became obsessed with the

SEARCH PARTIES look for signs of the silent 15-year-old, last seen since Thanksgiving



ABRUPTLY 'UNPLUGGING' KIDS FROM A GAME, SAYS BLOCK, HAS A VERY REAL RISK OF BACKLASH

share (more so for gamers, because of their "childlike" association, than for porn, news the doctor). And the addiction is frequently complicated by other underlying problems like depression, serious self-harm, or even by the time pressures that tempt to the computer has often become the primary relationship in their life, and the process of unplugging the person from the machine can be fragile. Black advises families to avoid abruptly "unplugging" gamers from their games or Internet use because of the danger of backlash. "It's an explosive situation. You should expect a very, very angry outburst that may last several days to weeks," he says. In an article in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* last year, Black argued that a significant contributing factor in the 1999 Columbine High School massacre was a decision by the parents of Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold to cut them off from their beloved Doom computer game. The response, he says,



WHAT HAPPENED TO BRANDON?

The disappearance of the teen has sparked an outcry over video game addictions

BY COLIN CAMPBELL AND JONATHAN GAYNOR • An abandoned UN military base runs through the rural landscape of One-Mile, just outside Barrie, Ont. Now a game of hide-and-seek by tall grass and a thin band of trees, it stretches out into the distance through farm fields almost as far as the eye can see. On a cold and rainy Sunday afternoon, a young search team is digging a pit for the loss of the fall leaves. The trail is mostly deserted, but it is still the center of a game of hide-and-seek. There are four police cars and a large van—a police mobile command centre—are parked where the trail intersects with a lonely rural road not far from Lake Simcoe. This is the spot where Brandon Crisp, a slight 15-year-old with dirty blond hair and green eyes, dropped his last seen post-Thanksgiving Monday evening,



'WE KNEW HE LIKED THE GAME, BUT HE NEEDED TO HAVE A LIFE APART FROM IT,' SAYS HIS MOM

all there was to life, and suddenly it seemed like his life was done."

To be confronted with his addiction, Doran sought help from one of the few organizations for people with video game-related problems—Online Gamers Anonymous. On Nov. 5, he placed to launch the group's first Canadian chapter with a meeting in a local Baptist church (details available at www.ogs.org).

Lisa Woolley, of Nashville, Tenn., founded *Older Gamers*, following the *Thimbletopping* Day 2005 outside of her son Simon. The 21-year-old had been a lifelong video game fix, but his personality changed almost overnight after he became involved in the online game *Everquest*. "Within three months he'd quit his job, got evicted from his apartment and became depressed and anti-social," recalls Woolley. "He suddenly replaced his family and friends with the game."

Woolley, a software consultant, tried to get help for her son, but had difficulty convincing health professionals that the game was the root of his problems. "One doctor told me I should be glad he wasn't addicted to drugs or alcohol," she says. After Shanti's suicide, she became determined to help others find the assistance they need. *Older Gamers*, a strictly volunteer operation, now fields 900 Internet and phone inquiries each day. Woolley denies a sharp distinction between console games and their newer online counterparts. "With

their off-line games there's cheating and an end. But these virtual worlds have been set up to replace the person's real world," she says. And Woolley, like other opponents of such games, notes the common human-protein design that developers are well aware of: the addictive properties of their products, overtly engineering psychologists and brain research are to help make them more compelling. "I believe they're like drug pushers, getting people addicted to live their problems," she says. "Restrictions have to be made on these games—it has to be more than just a label."

Brandon's parents say it's now clear their son was addicted to *Call of Duty*. "We knew he liked the game and we understood that, but he needed to have a life apart from the game," says Angelika Norlinggo, Brandon's mother. A few months after his disappearance, his parents gave their money to go to the store on Sunday, the teenagers took it to a Macy's convenience store, bought junk food and came home to keep playing the game. In another instance Brandon's uncle took a break from

the game to play basketball. He related to us.

But what confounds everyone involved in this case, from the police to his parents, is that beyond his devotion to

Call of Duty, he showed no outward signs of trouble. "He was a teenager who had a problem, but he wasn't a problem teenager," says Sgt. Glen Goodfriend of the Harris police. Matt McCann is Brandon's high school principal. "That is a kid who's a very good student, very good report cards, excellent attendance, an discipline issues whatsoever. Actually, quite a nice little guy," he says. The same goes for his few close friends. These are not bad kids," says McCann.

"I hear parents saying you should have watched him all the time on the game," says Angelika. "First of all, my son's been a great kid since out of the womb. He's a loving child, sensitive, a little bit shy." They kept a close eye on him from the time until he was 18, even 13 years old, she adds. "At some point you have to give him a little freedom and trust him, right?"

It is also that games might be addictive is a line that the industry would dramatically not cross. Microsoft, the primary partner of the Xbox system, recently matched the ensuing research information on *Grand Theft Auto*, bringing the total to \$99,300. Since Microsoft executives have been in direct contact with the *Grand Theft Auto* and have also waived privacy rules in order to furnish police with details about who Brandon was playing with online. The case party released a statement saying they "thought

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HARTLEY

{meet the experts}

Barbara Jaworski, CEO of The Workplace Institute (www.theworkplaceinstitute.org) and the author of *AAA Women: How to Engage the 30 Plus Woman and Beat the Men at Work*. She founded the *Real Employers Award for 30 Plus Candidates* and The Institute on the Mature Workforce.



Barbara Jaworski on Boomers in the Workplace

What are boomers looking for in the workplace?

Boomers are interested in flexibility. Some like to work a longer day so they can have Friday afternoons off. Some like to come in earlier and leave earlier. And some want to split their days and work part-time. Flexible workplaces offer a menu of options for their employees.

Boomers are also interested in health, because this is a generation that is aging, but that will never be old. Some see themselves as continuing to work until they're 90. They're interested in being engaged, in giving back and in having a real impact.

Do workplaces value older workers?

We see agencies globally, so one of the things we're working on is helping employers change their workplace culture so they have an age-free workplace. That is going to be the way of the future. All employees have strengths they bring to the job and teach each other. We're going to see a lot more mentoring in the workplace.

Here's an example. A large pulp and paper plant in Northern Ontario let go the maintenance person who took care of their boilers. He was in his 80s and they brought in a younger manager. They started having trouble with a boiler, so they asked the retiree to come back and, without even entering the boiler, he was able to tell them exactly what was wrong based on a vibration he felt in his left knee while he was sitting at his desk. That kind of knowledge isn't written in a manual—it's based on years of experience.

The Baby Boomer Retirement Survey conducted by Desjardins Financial Security found that two-thirds of all boomers are planning to retire sometime from the 2010s to the 2030s. What will that mean for you?

Yes. When a person begins speaking, I ask people at what age they plan to retire and their response—after 60%—expect to continue working past age 65. Now, whether they work for their current employer or a competitor or open their own business, whether they continue to be involved in hobbies or start something brand new, that depends on the individual and what the organization has done to ensure they are ready.

So, do boomers—do you plan to retire completely or partially or never?

I never plan on retiring. I love what I do.



When I present keynote speeches, I ask people at what age they plan to retire and the vast majority—about 80%—expect to continue working past age 65.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES HARTLEY

BRANDON'S parents and sister (top) at home in late October; at a vigil for the teen (bottom left); and at a vigil for the teen (bottom right).

BRANDON'S parents and sister (top) at home in late October; at a vigil for the teen (bottom left); and at a vigil for the teen (bottom right).

For more information on the Desjardins Financial Security retirement research visit www.rethinkretirement.com. To view a video of the interview, click a question or read related information visit www.mckinsey.ca/wealthpartners.



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ner with Brandon, his family and his community and we hope far his risk means," but it has raised further concern. A spokesman did not respond to questions about the Catalyst campaign that Brandon was "addicted" to his Xbox and his favored game. And a representative of the Entertainment Software Association of Canada, a game-maker lobby group, also refused all comment.

In an interview last summer, Hal Halpin, the president of the ECA's U.S. branch, argued the gaming community has been unfairly stigmatized. "What we're really talking about here is media addiction, not our addiction," he said. "We're not even talking about that," he told the *Washington Times*. "The issue has been politicized down to games, to the exclusion of all other media, including movies, music and television. It seems dangerous on radio." Halpin argues that the same diagnosis of obsession could easily be applied to YouTube, Star Wars' fans, or even doctors of sex in the City. Game journalists also point to research that suggests the program has positive benefits for kids. For example, this week, a U.S. study (commissioned by a video game site) concluded gamers are more socially and have better family and social lives than non-players.

The industry has put a ratings system in place for games—Call of Duty 4 is rated M (Mature) for "intense violence, strong language, blood and gore"—but has also worked to ensure that restrictions on games remain suggestions, not law. The ESA has launched nine legal challenges against state laws that sought to regulate minors' access to M or AO rated games. The lobby group argues that such laws are infringements of their First Amendment rights to freedom of expression. And so far, U.S. courts have agreed.

David Walsh, president and founder of the National Institute on Media and the Family, a Washington-based watchdog group, says he is alarmed by video game companies' "sustained lack of concern." If they will sell themselves in to games, he believes, they will sell themselves in to tobacco, to do-both poles, says Walsh. "It raises all sorts of liability issues for them. And my impression is that their strategy is to ignore it and hope it will go away." Cases like Brandon's, however, are forcing concerns onto the public agenda. While there is still a dearth of funding for research into possible links between games and addictive behavior, the demand for information is soaring. "If you talk to from-behind-the-scenes players like journalists they'll tell you that this is a huge issue," says Walsh. To respond, his organization has put together an academic study group to look at the prob-



ONLY 3 PER CENT OF U.S. KIDS DON'T PLAY. ALMOST ONE IN 10 IS PATHOLOGICALLY ADDICTED.

lem, and a planning for Europe international conference next year. "The way people are viewing this is changing quickly."

Probably what makes a game like Call of Duty 4 so attractive to kids, and even adults, is that it's so good. The game is fast-paced and intricate, and some studies indicate that it can, at least, give players rewarding feelings in the brain. Increasingly, the lure of financial rewards has also crept into the picture. Call of Duty, the bestselling "First Person Shooter" game of all time, is so successful that there are now professional leagues, like Major League Gaming, in which the world's best players can make tens of thousands of dollars playing at tournaments and occasional corporate sponsorships. Teenagers like Brandon play the game obsessively, fueled on Red Bull and junk food, to try to break another lucky streak. This season Steve Grop, who won the Call of Duty online "champion" title, says that he's been playing for years. "I'm not a professional player, but I'm a professional gamer," he says. "I'm not a professional player, but I'm a professional gamer."

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ALL TOO REAL: A still from the game Call of Duty, a fairly hard-to-spot photo of Brandon

As the days turned into weeks, Steve Grop wondered if his son was really just playing Call of Duty. The online "champion" Brandon played with went more like a video game, he says. But that's been enough of Brandon anywhere online since he left home. What really worries him is the possibility that his son may have somehow unwittingly come across with bad people—perhaps a sexual predator—on the Xbox Live system. Steve hopes that by spending the week, someone will find Brandon. But if his worst nightmare comes true, he has another message. "I want to educate every parent out there about the problems with these online games." ■



ENGLAND: SPARE RAVENS TO SPARE THE NATION?
There is an axiom that if there are ever fewer than six ravens in residence at the Tower of London, grave robbers would befall England. In the 17th century, King Charles I ordered them protected. As in a global economic meltdown unfolding, Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown is taking the preservation of getting their spires restored. He has arrived—Gordon and his family—and there are expected shortly. Says Copley, "We certainly feel more secure now."

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VISIONARIES
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HOW TO REBOOT THE HUMAN BODY

DR. ANDRAS NAGY is one of a handful of stem cell pioneers working in Toronto

Scientific director of Canada's Stem Cell Network, which connects more than 80 leading experts across the country

For the millions around the world suffering with chronic disease, they can't move nearly fast enough

In Toronto, a network of researchers work with the building blocks of human life to do the impossible

BY KATE LUNAO • Sitting in his well-lit office in downtown Toronto, renowned geneticist Andras Nagy flicks through a computer slide show. The images show various people: different ages, different shapes and sizes. "This person has diabetes," he says, pointing at the screen. "She needs insulin to produce cells in her body." He clicks to the next slide. "This person has multiple sclerosis. He needs myelin," which insulates the nerves. Another: "This person had a tumor on his tongue, which was removed," but the resulting spinal cord injury left the patient with a disability.

"This is where the field of stem cells is progressing," says Nagy, looking up from the screen.

With an unlimited source of the missing cells, "we could cure the disease." Today, as senior investigator at Mount Sinai Hospital's Samuel Lunenfeld Research Institute, Nagy is one of a handful of superstar researchers working to finally bring stem cells out of the lab and into the clinic. Every day, they're using the building blocks of human life to do what was once thought impossible. But doing the impossible is not exactly new for Nagy.

Over a decade ago, Nagy succeeded in creating an entire mouse from stem cells, proving they can change into virtually any cell type in the body. "No mother, no father, just the germ dish," says Nagy. In 2005, he established Canada's first stem cell lines from human embryos. Now they're focusing on a new area of research—one that suggests it may be possible to "reboot" human cells, creating heart cells or neurons out of skin. "We're moving faster than everyone thought possible," says Michael Robinson,

For decades, scientists have known that, in early embryonic form, stem cells can morph into any cell type in the body. Last year, Kyoto University's Shinya Yamanaka made a startling announcement: a day works the other way around. Working with human skin cells, Yamanaka found a way to push cells backward, to an embryonic-like state. These induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells for short) offer a way to treat patients with their own body's cells. "It's enabled us to overcome the barrier of having relatively few embryonic stem cell lines," says Gordon Keller, director of the McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine in Toronto. "Suddenly, we can make cells directly from the patient."

Imagine treating a car accident victim for a broken back, and injecting her own cells into the spine to speed recovery. Or giving drug-resistant cancer patients that harness blood cells to stimulate repair. One day, "you will probably be able to buy a regenerating kit from a company," Keller suggests. It sounds too incredible to be true, and for now, it is.



of Toronto-based body "We can take patients with 300 symptoms and harvest their neurons," says Chong. He began a post-doctoral research fellow in Janet Rossant's lab. "I was just used to the cells left in the experiments that otherwise wouldn't be possible."

The impact it could have on drug research may be equally profound. "Drug metabolism occurs in your liver, and liver cells are something we cannot readily make," Segem says. "You could do a lot of your drug testing in the dish, instead of in people."

Although clinical use of IPS cells is a long way off, "research grade" cells are already being stockpiled. Toronto is now home to the Ontario IPS Cell Facility, the first centre of its kind (Stem Cell Facility, Inc. is also on its way). Located at SickKids, the facility opened in June, since then, it has backed up studies, including Chong's. In the event of Ontario closures, these will be turned into IPS cells and provided by the bank at cost.

In the same blue-glass space that houses the Ontario IPS Cell Facility—in fact, just a few floors down—is the McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine, devoted to a relatively new type of medicine that aims to repair or replace living tissues and organs. Keller, an director, made headlines in April after successfully growing human heart progenitor cells, a crude form of heart cells, from embryonic stem cells. (These progenitor cells can make human heart cells that actually pulsate, like a miniature human heart.)

These, researchers say, are the "holy grail" of regenerative medicine. "We can take a patient's cells, make them into a new tissue for research."

AT THE McEwen Centre for Regenerative Medicine, researchers can shape IPS stem cells into new tissue for research.

microscope and into a petri dish. It consists of a microscopic small, and describes any large clusters of IPS cells. These were created, Chong says, with a skin sample taken from a patient with sickle cell syndrome, a childhood neurodevelopmental disorder affecting about one in 10,000 babies. "It's one of the leading causes of mental retardation in females," Chong says. "That's why we're very interested in it." If these IPS cells can be turned into neurons, they could provide a unique window on the condition, and perhaps even a way around it.

Until now, creating an animal model was often the best way to study disease. But this method has obvious limitations—after all, a mouse is not a person. "In mice, you can't model higher function, like cognitive ability," Chong says. IPS cells give researchers an unprecedented tool with which to under-

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'THIS FIELD IS GOING TO TRANSFORM MEDICINE OVER THE NEXT 50 YEARS'

science is still in a very early stage," says the Toronto-based CEO of the MDS Discovery Institute. "This field is going to transform medicine over the next 50 years."

It's an early world that includes wading toward a common goal, science in meeting at an unlikely place. "In the last two years, it's been anything's possible," says Benoit Rousselle, scientific investigator at the Gladstone Institute in San Francisco. Before the discovery of IPS cells, the work that's now underway "sort of ate up the sky," he says. "It hasn't eaten up any of the sky."

It's the idea that a skin cell can morph into a stem cell in a lab dish. Here's another adult cell that isn't just able to move back, it's a stem cell. They might be able to go sideways, too. In August, a team of Harvard biologists announced they'd successfully changed one type of adult cell directly into another, inside a living mouse—without turning it into an IPS cell first. They flipped three or four switches to convert a parent cell into an adult progenitor one, the kind that describes nerve.

It's a notion that angers Andrew Noyes. When an adult cell is reprogrammed into an IPS cell, and begins to move into an embryonic-like state, Noyes hypothesizes it

has a "point of no return"—a grey area where it's not quite an IPS cell, and not quite an adult cell either. This he calls "Area 51." Unlike an IPS cell (which can become virtually any cell type), what falls inside Area 51 might be able to move specialized. "Maybe they can make only blood, or only muscle," he says. Because the cell is already on the path to becoming adult cells, they might be more efficient to work with than IPS cells—so, when that car accident victim is rushed to hospital, these Area 51 cells can be more quickly and easily changed into the cell type that's needed to help her.

"Most likely what will happen is a bank will be created," Noyes says. Unlike those stored at Ontario's IPS bank, though, Noyes believes these cells will be created in the lab, not in the body. "They will be pre-identified for specific purposes," he explains. "They will be ready on the shelf. When a doctor needs it, they need simply look for a match."

Leaving the office, Noyes outlines the lab and takes a petri dish from the refrigerator. He places it under the microscope. What it contains is beautiful, elongated shapes that look like a fish. They're growing, he says. Noyes has observed these adult muscle fibers directly from skin, through a skin biopsy, in a new way to grow muscle.

In our bid to extend human life, one thing is clear: the meaning of life is perhaps much more complex than we ever imagined. "When you see a cell just sitting there, it's hard to believe they're alive," Noyes says. "When you see them actually moving in the petri dish, it's evident." ■

ON THE WEB Noyes also read the story on the go on his BlackBerry—visit macleans.ca/mobile to download the Maclean's Mobile application today.

TELECOMS BOOSTS GDP

BY MICHAEL COOPER

TALK TO US ABOUT
COMMUNICATION FOR ALL

ERICSSON
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WAS JANE DOE THE BAIT?

He exposed her to HIV, and police and Public Health, she claims, knew. Now she's suing them. BY CHARLIE GILLIS

HER NAME IS COVERED by publication bans, but it was on the wrong side of *Ayana* as Johnson *Ayana* like a ticking bomb. "Jane Doe" is the last woman known to have slept with *Ayana*, a man on trial in Hamilton, Ont., for allegedly killing two women and endangering the lives of nine others by knowingly exposing them to HIV. Sometime in the next few weeks, Doe is expected to take the stand as the Crown tries to prove first-degree murder on *Ayana*, a prosecution that has been denounced by some AIDS advocates as an attempt to "criminalize" HIV.

It promises to be a dramatic moment, in part because Doe wants to do a lot more than just her ex-boyfriend behind bars. In January, the 34-year-old from Brantford, Ont., filed a civil suit against a raft of public officials and institutions, from Hamilton Public Health Services to the police officers who investigated *Ayana*'s first murder. It also accused them of negligence and breach of duty for acting as they did.

Accusations of other claims are daunting in the extreme: after seven years of keeping tabs on *Ayana*, after learning he was having unprotected sex with numerous women without disclosing he was HIV-positive, after obtaining court orders to stop him from doing so, after pleading him under police surveillance for weeks during which she died twice, the prosecution simply left her to become infected.

The allegations are very powerful, and the city, the health unit and the police deny they acted to defend themselves. Still, the case underlines how rarely by now they themselves identified the virus that causes AIDS, authorities seem no better fixed to stop someone who

is recklessly spreading it before lives are needlessly lost. No less than 70 people have died of criminal acts tied to machines since the early 1990s, according to statistics compiled by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, most of them criminal negligence or criminal assault causing bodily harm. But the cops and prosecutors come into play only after public health officials throw

up their hands, by which time others—sometimes several others—have been infected. In most provinces, public health officers have the prerogative to issue court-ordered behavior orders, and even detain residents without a warrant. Ryan Bell, executive director of the HIV/AIDS Legal Clinic of Ontario, "The powers are there," he says. But at some when

DOE ONCE SPOTTED POLICE WATCHING HIS HOUSE. SHE EVEN ASKED THEM WHY.



AIDS faces murder charges for exposing women to HIV

authorities act together, even the registration of AIDS, medical officials sometimes use as a last resort. And questioning HIV positive people? Unheard of.

The *Ayana* case, in particular, added to an already intense campaign. A Ugandan born immigrant with a firm command of English, *Ayana* initially acted co-operatively with public health officials after being diagnosed with HIV in 1996, according to testimony heard at his criminal trial. He attended counselling sessions and kept his job as an analyst with the Ontario Ministry of Government. He appeared to understand his responsibilities under the law, agreeing to practice safe sex and to refrain his partners of his HIV status.

When public health officials decided he was dropping them in not yet clear Doe as an infected client. *Ayana* said that "in or about the year 2000, [the public health service] determined that the defendant *Ayana* was engaging in an ongoing pattern of unprotected sexual contact with unsuspecting women," and that several women in a number of communities had become infected. In October 2001, the health unit issued an administrative order under Section 32 of Ontario's Health Protection and Promotion Act directing *Ayana* to wear a condom, disclose his status to accepters and attend counselling. That month, in a phone conversation with a public health nurse, he acknowledged having unprotected sex with at least one woman without inform-

ing her of his HIV-positive status, his criminal record. By the following April, notified Dr. Charles Richardson, Hamilton's chief medical officer of health, the department had a list of 30 names of HIV-positive women in the region who had named *Ayana* as a sex partner. Alarmed, officials went to court to obtain a stricter order—this time under Section 32(2) of the act—which would allow them to detain *Ayana* if he failed again to comply. But they never got around to issuing that power. Instead they called the police.

By Doe's reckoning, this allowed, knew

CHIEF medical officer Richardson outside the courthouse



AFRAID OF DRIVING HIV-POSITIVE PEOPLE AWAY, SOME HEALTH OFFICIALS HESITATE TO WARN THE PUBLIC

mental process here doesn't have consequences. She didn't meet *Ayana* until February 2003, her last night, and for seven months carried on an intimate relationship with the charming 36-year-old man knowing he had HIV. All of that done, public health officials were aware of his relationship, the suit claims, for at least three of those months, the police were watching his two-story brick row house in Hamilton's west end, where the often spent the night. At one point, in August 2003, the actual report officers taking out the house and approached to ask them why. "They didn't advise her of the status," the suit says, adding, "the police" were interested in arresting [him] and used her for bait."

This is no small charge, harbinging it as it does to the case of another Jane Doe—a woman who in the mid-1990s successfully sued the Toronto police for leaving her and other women in the mercy of a serial sex addict known as the "Ridgely Rapist." She claimed police should have issued a public warning, something the Bramford woman says public health authorities or police in Hamilton could have done. Other questions began with the shortage of witnesses who said they'd slept with *Ayana*, why couldn't someone simply tip Jane Doe off? Why didn't they have the health unit contact her? Why not use their special

power under the law to quarantine her?

With the trial under way and off-piste news spreading, official implications are mounting. Doug Bueks, a lawyer representing the police, the public health service and the City of Hamilton, said only that Doe is "expressing under serious misapprehension of the underlying facts," adding, "it will be clear that both the health unit and the Hamilton police response to this situation was diligent, timely and sensitive to the rights of all the individuals involved." "It's even unclear whether the HIV

positive people wonder how it ever went this far. Adrian Bern, acting executive director of the Hamilton AIDS Network, says there are the feet of public health. "The police were doing what they were trained to do," he says. "Public Health had the ability, with out involving the police, to stop him and quarantine him." "I doubt it, say other experts, that not how may be their roles. Richard Elbert, the executive director of the Canadian HIV

for infecting women with HIV. "Surveys, who also looked from Uganda, repeatedly exposed the danger behind the disclosure before his death in 1993. Even so, he received medical treatment. There are no adequate steps he lived in a similar state of denial. At his trial, Dr. Richardson, the chief medical officer of health, testified that *Ayana* "was angry about his diagnosis, that he didn't understand how he had been infected."

Being in the criminal justice system, and those especially grow weary, says Elbert: on some days, *Ayana* and his two lawyers are conspicuously the only black men in the courtroom where he is on trial. Some AIDS organizations, including Bern's group, have set up support outreach programs for African and Caribbean communities to promote the dangers of unsafe sex, and the importance of disclosing one's HIV status to sex partners. "It is a very important but difficult issue," says Peck.

If the victims were forgotten in all this, it may be because many don't see them as criminal innocents. Many Canadians view sexual health as a matter of personal responsibility, notes Bern, and polls show a surprising lack of empathy for those living with HIV. Still, a hard ear to sympathize with some of the women testifying against *Ayana*. At least one of the women said *Ayana* outright told her his HIV status, and took his dental floss, prosecutor Tim Power told the court. "The net only failed to choke the man, but went further and held about it."

Since December 1993, what *Ayana* did in late August 2003—seven days before his arrest—and got the same answer. By then, the development of a rash that needed medical attention. She took an HIV test at the time but had not used during his. In fact, she was in bed with him the night police arrested him, according to Crown evidence. That night, police officers freely told her why they'd been following him, her sex status. A few days later, her HIV test came back positive. Doe has since received a letter of apology from *Ayana*, in which he asked for her forgiveness, he said says. For all she knows, the public officials tasked with protecting her may feel similar regret. But with the man's lawyers continuing to defend themselves vigorously and with her health in constant peril, she will be likely to hear them say so. ■



STRIPPER LOSES SHOE, CALAPHY ENIGMAS
 All Charles Richardson wanted was a wife like a stripper in Pompano Beach, Fla., was a good time. Instead he got disaster: during a pole dance, a performer's shoe flew off her foot. At the colling, shattered the mirror on it and glass rained down on Priests. Followed by the shoe (Priests suffered numerous cuts and is now suing the club, fully insured Sunday Town, the LESTS DOG, stating the employees failed to execute her work in a safe manner.

'I WAS SO INTO IT. IT WAS MY DREAM TO PLAY IN THE NHL AND NOW I KNOW IT'S NOT POSSIBLE.' —WOMEN'S HOCKEY STAR **KIM ST-PIERRE** BEING A GOALIE FOR THE MONTREAL CANADIENS

ALAIN CARPENTIER ONE FIFTYFIVE NEARY TO GO

French heart transplant specialist Alain Carpentier has developed the world's first fully implantable artificial heart, which, he claims, perfectly replicates the human organ. Working with a team of medical sergents, engineers, Carpentier borrowed electronic sensors used in guided missiles to create the device to respond to changes in blood pressure and flow and adapt heartbeat rate accordingly. "The aim is to allow patients to go from an impossible life, where they can do just a few steps from their bed, to a normal life. They will even be able to run, although not a marathon," Carpentier said. Once a patient gives up, once a doctor gives up, once a patient is told they have 20 years to live, a worldwide shortage of microprocessors, this takes well let the heart go on.

RAFFAELLO FOLLIERI HATHAWAY'S BAD DATE

Some guys are more than just bad dates. Raffaello Follieri went out with actress Anne Hathaway, moving smoothly through the Hollywood scene and among affluent Americans, traveling in executive jets and attending designer fashion shows. But last week, the high flying "inventor" came in for a splashy crash. He pleaded guilty in a New York City court to charges of sexual fraud, money laundering and conspiracy. The court heard how he'd convinced investors that he had special relations with the Vatican and could buy church properties at below-market costs for redevelopment into "socially responsible" projects. It was all a sham to finance his lifestyle. The dapper young man was ordered to repay \$28.2 million and pay \$5 million in costs, and to stay out for 96 months in prison. Those arrested in June, shortly after Hathaway highlighted Follieri's schemes but her own crimes were to be linked to his in gossip columns.

CLINT EASTWOOD THE GRAND OLD MAN OF LAWN & ORDER

Dirty Harry is back, but now he's moon Archie Barker. Clint Eastwood's new self-directed film, *Gone with the Wind*, stars Eastwood as an aging, racist gun who believes in vigilante justice. It naturally led to a wide spread rumor that it would be about the continuing adventures of Harry Callaghan. But no, Eastwood is actually playing an elderly bigot named Will Somers, whose beloved 1973 *Graffiti* was stolen by an Asian teenager, leading to an odd couple relationship. At 75, he seems more than capable of "socially responsible" projects. It was all a sham to finance his lifestyle. The dapper young man was ordered to repay \$28.2 million and pay \$5 million in costs, and to stay out for 96 months in prison. Those arrested in June, shortly after Hathaway highlighted Follieri's schemes but her own crimes were to be linked to his in gossip columns.

MIA KIRSHNER FROM GLAMOUR TO REFUGEE CAMPS

The glamorous Toronto-born star of *The L Word*, *The Black Dahlia* and *River* has written a book on an unlikely topic: the lives of refugees around the world. *I Love Her* is a gloriously readable book of Mia Kirshner's trips to Iraq, Somalia and Malawi, and is a far cry from her days as a seductive *Maxim* pin-up. In 2001 she was organizing an Afghan women's benefit while also serving a *Stuff* magazine cover story. When she was brought on the book, a light bulb went off in her head. "The news doing this again," she recalled. Kirshner spent part of her seven years traveling and filming this book out of pocket. The result may be her best work yet, a journey with the very dangers of *Tommy Lee* and *Amos*. "I will continue to be an actor," she told *Maxim*. "To do more books, I have to work. I can't forget the reason why I do this."

MAHMOUD ABUMADENJAD PROPPED UP

Trying to extinguish mounting criticism at home has been a tall order for President Mahmoud Abumadenjad. Last week, Iran's official news agency reported that Abumadenjad, 55, is suffering from exhaustion. The president, who works 120 hours a day, insisted he wasn't ill. Yet pictures taken at a recent ceremony show a disheveled president propped up by bodyguards, and rumors circulate on Iranian websites run by his opponents that Abumadenjad is seriously ill. Members of his parliament have openly dismissed his remarks as nonsense designed to cast doubt on whether the increasingly unpopular president will run for a second term next year. No matter what the purpose, Abumadenjad's race for re-election he is going to need all the strength to stand his presidency. With Iran's official unemployment rate hovering at 30 per cent, inflation levels rising 30 per cent, and oil prices dropping rapidly, even his own supporters are questioning whether he is the right man for the job.

STEFAN PETZNER A SCANDALOUS DEATH IN THE BOYS' PARTY

When a horrible murder's been for Stefan Petzner, a 27-year-old Austrian, leader of Austria's right-wing Alliance for the Future of Austria party, was killed in a highway crash. Now he's been accused of murdering a national politician. The president, who works 120 hours a day, insisted he wasn't ill. Yet pictures taken at a recent ceremony show a disheveled president propped up by bodyguards, and rumors circulate on Iranian websites run by his opponents that Abumadenjad is seriously ill. Members of his parliament have openly dismissed his remarks as nonsense designed to cast doubt on whether the increasingly unpopular president will run for a second term next year. No matter what the purpose, Abumadenjad's race for re-election he is going to need all the strength to stand his presidency. With Iran's official unemployment rate hovering at 30 per cent, inflation levels rising 30 per cent, and oil prices dropping rapidly, even his own supporters are questioning whether he is the right man for the job.

KIM ST-PIERRE TAKING SOME SHOTS FROM THE CANADIENS

Just before a start last weekend with her Canadian Women's Hockey League team, the Montreal Star, two-time Olympic gold medalist Kim St-Pierre got a surprise call—would she be up for a 90-minute game with the Montreal Canadiens? The goalie for Canada's national women's hockey team didn't hesitate to step in for the team. She was out with the flu. Along with backup goaltender Janelle Hulse, 28, faced seven former players such as Andrea Markov and Alex Kovalev, who find a pack that would just be out, just sitting back. St-Pierre would have been declared the end of a dream. "They're so powerful. Their quick release is something I never needed. I was just so into it. It was my dream to play in the NHL and now I know it's not possible—but just to practice with them is something to cherish."

R.H. THOMPSON AND MARTIN CONROY PROJECTING GREATNESS

After reading the letters his five great-aunts wrote from Europe during the First World War, actor R.H. Thompson, 61, was moved to write the play *The Last Letter* in 2003. Four of the letters were in the conflict. Now, with lighting designer Martin Conroy, he's undertaken a human journey for more epic. Beginning next week, the play will be projecting the names of all 65,000 Canadians who died in the conflict, in a vigil ending on Nov. 11, the 90th anniversary of the war's end. The projections will take place in Ottawa and five other cities. There will be a special premiere in a small hall that will project the names of Canada's Great War dead in London's Whitehall Square. The Queen and Prince Philip have said to attend the night, an unexpected but welcome addition to the project. "The production understands the size of that loss," Thompson says of the Queen. "Her generation gets it."



ST-PIERRE: PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF TROTT; EASTWOOD: PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF TROTT; KIRSHNER: PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF TROTT; ABUMADENJAD: PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF TROTT; PETZNER: PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF TROTT; THOMPSON: PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF TROTT; CONROY: PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFF TROTT

THE BACK PAGES

books

A novelist of few words

P.66

film

De Rigo's lament

P.68

bazaar

Wow—nice nickel!

P.67

travel

Snakes + beavers + trouble

P.66

help

Remembering lost babies

P.68

feschuk

Decidedly undecided

P.71



THE REIGN OF KAIN



Performing the most precarious dance of her career, Canada's ballet queen taps Nureyev, Jagger, Chekhov—and Harper **BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON**

stage

In the early 1970s, *Ballet Nureyev* and Miké Jagger were two of the most iconic performers on the planet, twins in an urgency from defrauded works, and Kain Kain was a young ballerina. She will never forget the night she joined Nureyev for dinner at a club in Paris and found herself seated between the Russian dancer and "the larger pair of lips I'd ever seen." Jagger "was quite interested," she recalls, "and he was all over me. I think any one who sat next to him, male or female, would have had the same treatment. He wanted to get me on the dance floor with him, but I'd been dancing for eight hours that day, so I didn't. He wanted me to come home with him, and do all sorts of other things, and I didn't. I was a very ordinary young person."

More than three decades later, as artistic director of the National Ballet of Canada, Kain has ripped the mystique of both Nureyev and Jagger. In 2004 she opened the inaugural season at Toronto's new opera house with a rebranded version of Nureyev's *The Sleeping Beauty*, which the Soviet defector created for the National Ballet in 1972. Nureyev, who made Kain a star, has been dead for 15 years, but with a princely kiss from the grave he helped her revive her company's slumbering hot office. Then, the next season, shocking ballet purists, she presented *Rosier*, a balletic piece inspired by Jagger and set to the music of the Rolling Stones.

CHALLENGING: Kain (left) leads *Rosier* and Zdeněk Kozma (right) in *The Sleeping Beauty*

Well, that got my attention. As someone versed in ballet, but extremely familiar with the Stones, I was intrigued by the notion of marrying classical dance and classic rock. Ballet was so much to sympathy for the front? Twisting to *Rocky Horror*? What would that look like? So one night last March, I bought my way through the winter's biggest snowfall to the opera house. *Rosier*, from British choreographer Christopher Bruce, turned out to be a bewitching send-up of Jagger's sexual posturing yet to early Stones songs. But a full shot of Kain's own surgical self-jawed, and failed to harness the season's dark energy.

When really rocked the opera house that evening was the piece that opened the bill—*La Prodiges* by Chopin from Montreal choreographer Marie Chouinard. This walk on the wild side of modern dance made *Rosier* seem tame by comparison. Covered with spiky neckties, the dancers performed verbally asked, the women circled in fresh leotards

with strips of black tape making strategic arcs. Bodies merged and separated in an amorphous flow of movement, Zdeněk Kozma in a calligraphy of desire and frustration.

I had no idea ballet could look like this. Which made me typical of the new audience Kain has been trying to reach. She pulls them in with a pop-confection like *Rosier*, or last season's *West Side Story*, then knocks them out with something forbidding they never knew existed. It's as odd as baby-and-switch, but it seems to be working. "I wanted the slowest thing so people would come," says Kain. "If I'd wanted 24 Preludes, I wouldn't have sold a ticket. I'm looking for people who haven't given ballet a try. If I can't get them in the door, what kind of future are we going to have? And if it takes 20 years to get them to take a look..."

Since 91 her corner office at the National Ballet's headquarters on the Toronto waterfront, Kain has a looking-though she's been unable to shake. It's been a stressful time. Her father has just died. Kain no longer dances and rarely watches, and from the old Pléiade class. But she still holds herself with the easy carriage of a prima ballerina. And as she describes the thrill of watching her dancers perform, her almond eyes con-



A STAR OF DUKE COMEDIES like *Analyze This*, De Niro these days is more of a producer and real estate hoarder who acts on the side

What just happened to my career?

A showbiz satire starring De Niro as a veteran who's losing his grip is all too close to home

BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON • It was a shock to see Robert De Niro and Al Pacino do the Top 10 list on *Letterman* last month. Seated in dubby leather armchairs against a backdrop of books, like a couple of old roots grooving. *Masterpiece Theatre*, they took turns rhyming off "The Top 10 Reasons I Like Being an Actor." They were grooving. *Fighter's Kill*, a female cop thriller that would come along with barely a whimper. The bit was amusing enough. But it was as if they'd decided the only way to salvage some dignity from the late '80s psycho movie was to submit to a well-deserved send-up of the cineaste shilling into their dotage (De Niro had the best line: "If you do a scene where you're crying piddling, they often let you keep the piddling.") It was all rather sad. Not so long ago, it was a huge deal to see these two titans of the method share a scene together. For the first time, in *Heat* (1995) New York's *redacted* to talk-show shock.

Last year in a *Q&A* interview, director Francis Ford Coppola, who had worked with De Niro and Pacino in their primes on *The Godfather* movies, accused them, along with Jack Nicholson, of getting lazy and playing safe. "They all live off the air of the legend," he said. "There's a tradition of decadence and vanity among Americans acting legends, from Orson Welles to Martin Scorsese. But despite freezing away his pedigree with dumb comedies like *Meet the Parents* and *Analyze This*, De Niro has retained some of his mystique. That's because, unlike Al and Jack, he's not a cut-out man born here. This default mode is not a reserve, as if he's put his talent away for safekeeping. And he has a permanent air of world-weary resignation that says to the good lord, have decreed him rather than vice versa."



WE'RE STALKING... GEORGE TAKEI

There's trouble ahead for the *Star Trek* Enterprise. After William Shatner learned that he didn't get invited to the gay wedding of George "Mr. Spock" Takei, the television first took at Shatner, and then women from him. "We kept reaching out and reaching," Takei told an interviewer. "But he takes the bait and he twists it and he turns it into something that's ugly." Shatner previously described Takei as having a "pinkly oblivious psychosis."

These days, with his Tribeca Film Center De Niro in more of a producer and real-estate hoarder who acts on the side. He seems to have lost his passion for it. But in his new movie, *What Just Happened?*, he gives his most appealing performance in some time, and that may be because he's playing a frustrated producer. For once, De Niro is not squandering his pedigree so much as lamenting the state of a commercially driven industry that has made it irrelevant.

Directed by Barry Levinson, *What Just Happened?* (in theaters next week) is scripted by veteran producer Art London, whose work includes *The Untouchables*, *Fight Club*, *Into the Wild*, and *Four*. *Being in his own book* (submitted later *Midnight* Takei from the *Power Law*), London has conflated a Hollywood messiah into a fictional character, casting De Niro as a workaholic producer named Ben who loses in terror of slipping off the A-list.

Ben has produced a thriller starring Sean Penn that ends with the leading man and his dog being shot dead. He's up against the studio head (a caricatured Kevin Spacey), who vows to bury the movie unless the end is softened, and a drag-addle film director who won't compromise. Ben's next movie is about to collapse because it's impossible to see. Bruce Willis, sporting an impressive beard that he refuses to shave off. Willis is such a right

star that even his agent (a usually John Turturro) seemed to talk to him. Meanwhile, Ben is paranoid that he's succored or will (Katie Wright) be sleeping with his screenwriter (Stanley Tucci).

Admittedly, all this sounds pretty juicy. And some of the details are accurate. (While producing *The Edge*, London fired a crisis over when Al Pacino didn't want to show off his beard.) But the movie lacks the bite of *The Player*. Fear and loathing in Hollywood is a farsighted paroxysm, and here the movie seems pointless. We have no reason to care about any of the characters because in the end there's nothing at stake—except the fate of a movie and one man's career. And in that sense, *What Just Happened?* is afflicted by the same shallow pathology that it's depicting.

The film within a film is shown opening the Cannes film festival, which means it's only for the stars—a film that our mother does to the house when *What Just Happened?* premiered in Cannes as the closing night film, after a late-night reception at Sundance. I'll never forget seeing De Niro at the Cannes press conference, being besieged by a mob of journalists asking questions and begging for autographs. And he dutifully complied, one woman nodding, pressed up and wrapped her arm around him for a photo. De Niro grimaced. It was like seeing his character from *What Just Happened?* brought to life, a scold from the Hollywood franchise trapped inside his own head of his own movie. ■



"I'M AMAZED at the engineering that went into some of these drying racks," says one fan. "Some are works of art."

Decorate your house with laundry

Rising energy costs have created a market for deluxe versions of old-fashioned drying racks

BY PATRICIA TREMBLE • Three years ago, Paul Goyard didn't care when writing the whimsy of his family's sweaters and cozy mittens. He was trying a lot of old-fashioned techniques. Some took over half that of the firm and opened the *Clothesline* Shop in South China, Maine. Some the part-time business got so big he quit his part-time job. Today he sells a seemingly infinite variety of indoor and outdoor drying equipment ranging from under \$20 to \$100 of racks to basic pulley clotheslines systems.

For Goyard's customers, saving money is the hands-down reason for buying the equipment. According to Natural Resources Canada, even with energy-saving technologies, the average dryer still used up 900 kilowatts, or around \$100 worth, of electricity in 2005. For bigger families, the cost can easily double or triple. And people wanting to reduce their bills aren't seeking for the whitest or cheapest, flimsy drying racks that collapse at the sight of a wet pair of jeans or provide only enough space to dry a few pieces of light-colored gear. Now, they want bigger, sturdier racks to hang loads after loads of laundry. Goyard's top-seller is a 138-lb. extendable clothesline made with seven rungs of drying space.

For those craving even more drying space, Goyard offers the "Café de la Colonne." It was made popular from a European firm called *Sun-AG* that has been in the laundry equipment business for 61 years. In aluminum frames, designed not to be lightweight yet sturdy, can hold an enormous amount of wet clothes and still hold away nearby for storage. The North American distributor, Michael Barnes of Thornhill, Ont.-based *Good Food* acts, once the trend took off at drying, and in November 2005 left his full-time post

job to become *Sun-AG's* rep. His order have doubled every year. Though he sells smaller products, like a hanging dryer for the bathtub with 10 m of hanging line for \$45, and a 900 cord measuring unit weighing less than two kilograms that can be installed above the washer and dryer, demand is strongest for the bigger models.

One buyer was Valerie David, a 57-year-old teacher, also of Thornhill. Fed up with her small, inefficient wooden rack, she hit the Internet and ended up buying the \$130 *Clothesline* with eight extendable drying rods and 15 m of drying space, which she keeps in her bedroom. Though she still uses a regular dryer, "at least two big loads but the rack can wait."

While Barnes agrees with Goyard that rising energy costs are the main factor for the new popularity of the racks, he also points out that governments are encouraging citizens to go green as a way to cut down electricity use. Alexander Lee, executive director of the *Green*, a N.Y.-based *Green Laundry* Ltd., which promotes air drying, believes "the tide is turning." Clearly, air drying is and will be a natural time to come. Last spring, Toronto's *Hydro* gave away free 12 m indoor-outdoor retractable clotheslines. Some 15,000 retractable clotheslines. And Ontario's *Hydro* has the no-outdoor drying constant pro-

hibit in suburban housing developments. "Laundry is a highly competitive market," explains Ben spokesman Madeline Lernerburg-Fisch, with a laugh. "We're offering way more drying solutions," ranging from \$7 to \$45. Ben's new solid wood *Twin* rack (\$90), which fits five against a wall when not in use, has been flying out of stores. Even Canadian Tire, which has sold complete cheap metal racks, has popped in variety and quality, after noting double-digit annual sales growth over the last few years. Spokesman Lisa Gibson says the chain has seen an "increase in people willing to spend more on deluxe models."

For the frugal, Jeffrey Kroll of East Windsor, Conn., suggests looking for antique versions on eBay. He's been collecting drying racks for a decade and has persuasive reasons in his collection. "I'm constantly amazed by the engineering that went into making some of these racks. Some are works of art." Indeed, it's not unusual for buyers to need lessons on how to properly unfold and set up old racks.

Though it takes a bit more time to hang wet clothes, Claudia Fierro of Indianapolis, who set up her racks in the family room and bedrooms, points out one advantage to drying clothes on herself: she doesn't run a humidifier during the long, dry winter. And for those who dislike long lines, *DeNiro's* *Midnight* of *Real Green* Goods in New Hampshire has a laundry solution. "The chain in the dryer for three minutes on full and you'll never know they were air dried." ■



WHAT THEY GOT FOR IT • A MEGA-SHREDDER

It can be said that the "mega-shredder" would be their highlight. An agent who shredded, it was not only used for shredding off Chicago following the bankruptcy of a local auto-wrecking yard. The machine can take three cars and can recycle clothing every minute. Success it was out of compliance with local environmental rules. The owners had to get rid of the machine. A Texas company picked it up for \$1500. You know you want one too.

PARENTS Julie and Frank Monicelli hold baby Alden, surrounded by family. In one of Weitzburg's documentary-style photographs

The saddest of Madonna portraits

Grief over losing a baby is accompanied by a panic: how to remember what he looked like?

Within weeks, Pac* and Haggins founded Now I Lay Me Down, relying on a few photographers. They now have taken 5,000 in over 25 countries, including Canada. The free unions—valued at \$1,000 and \$1,800—are available for up to 28 weeks of gestation and are provided for babies born in hospitals. Images are normally black and white to de-emphasize the discolouration and with millibars, tap, and carapace were used to soften more detail.

[illegible]

Chicago-based David Hochberg, his deceased friends for over 10 years in the documentary style through his work in a hospital cancer department portrait studio and at his health care professionals' record of their lives together with their families. "To validate that they are people that this life does matter," Guembar is a Ph.D. candidate studying between Simon Fraser University, says such help families cope. Though grief would be similar to physical healing, he says, "if you're not in a position to say that, then it's not helpful." He says that this challenge is to help who has achieved thousands of financial photographs and has written his past portrait photography, a more "artistic" style. "We are important as the number of photographs of us—to have pictures in this culture is not to have pictures

rankings "the government and the

JOHN J. TUBBY DOLPHINS
Whites in Japan's Kinokuni Marine world have
and can't make their jumping targets. Keep-
hid in their sluggishness, then noticed that
than normal. A weigh-in showed that all 10
by 10 kg. The culprit was their daily diet of
kick was unusually fatty. Now the dolphins
are much less fat.

Now, research suggesting that families benefit from photographs of deceased offspring has brought the practice back. "There's that pivotal moment, especially after a still birth, where many all of a sudden won't remember what her baby looked like—and there's panic," says Mary MacCormick, head of the Canadian Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths. Memories of the moment of



The portly, wisecracking critic is SCHULZ-CLASS no more, feeling last night in evidence of playing a vigilante in the big-screen remake of *The Green Hornet*, which begins shooting next year. He refuses to weigh himself, he says, and contributes the loss of weight to simple exertion and diet. He credits his girlfriend with encouraging him. "She claims she doesn't like me any more now than when I was heavier, but I think that's completely not true."

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ST. KENNETH WHYTE



MEET MACLEAN'S PUBLISHER & EDITOR KENNETH WHYTE IN:

WATERLOO MON. 10, 7:30 PM Kiss Church, West North Street (519) 584-2665
Reading with Marylou Finlay**VANCOUVER MON. 10, 7 PM** Chapters, 780 Robson Street (604) 683-4066
On-stage interview with Ken MacLean**EDMONTON MON. 10, 7:30 PM** Greenwoods' Bookstore, 7575 104 St. (780) 459-2005
On-stage interview with Todd Bakula**CALGARY MON. 24, 7 PM** Chapters, 5005 Oakeshield Dr. N.W. (403) 282-4880
On-stage interview with Donna Mitchell**TORONTO MON. 26, 7 PM** Indigo, 55 Bloor Street West (905) 615-3536
On-stage interview with Suzanne O'Regan**MONTREAL MON. 30, 10 AM** Books and Breakfast, sponsored by Paragraphe Books
Omnivore, 1050 Sherbrooke St. West,
For tickets call (514) 845-5881**BIRMINGHAM Dec. 1, 7 PM** Engaging Ideas Series, Birmingham Central Library
with A Different Drummer Books
For tickets call (360) 629-9525**GEORGE BAY DEC. 2, 7 PM** At the Bookshelf (in cinema), 41 Quebec St.
On-stage interview with Mary Lou Finlay
For tickets call (519) 821-1311

VISIT MACLEANS.CA/EVENTS FOR MORE INFORMATION

MACLEAN'S
A CANADIAN PUBLICATIONI'll be the
greatest
undecided
voter in
AmericaSCOTT
FESCHUKWell, this is it. I've enjoyed
writing this column for
Maclean's magazine over
those past three years but
the time has come to put
my real passion in life.That's why I'm moving
south and becoming a full-

time undecided American voter.

I want to be loved, and everybody loves
undecided American voters. They get the
attention. They get the affection. They get to
own these little fish that show their inner
opinion of politicians and words and stuff.
Best of all, they get to fulfill the American
dream of going on live television—but with-
out the hassle of being pursued in a high-
speed chase.Once I'm a full-time undecided American
voter, politicians will try desperately to win
me over, spending tens of millions on pre-
sumptive advertising and, as Sarah Palin's case
shows, cable news anchors will try to use me
to probe my psychic, wedding guests as it
turns out that neither comedy nor is it
appealing to me. To me, and I think I think
I will suddenly see events and forecasting,
finally acquiring the air of mystery I strived
to achieve years ago with the eye patch and
sneak. (PSL turns out that combi goes off
more as an act of "gay panic.")We undecideds—we are the modern-day
Hamlets, extratropicals of vacillation punc-
uated by black stuns and exaggerated
laughs. Our lives: pretty a second thought.
Our chins are red and raw from having been
stroked so thoughtfully. And our motto?
It is comprised of the four most powerful
words in the lexicon of the universe: On the
Other Hand.Being undecided is made that an inter-
mission genre at a huge time over. It reflects
the voter of many of the burdens of citizen-
ship, such as trying to not seem stupid. If
you're undecided, your ignorance suddenly
seems almost noble, tragic even. It's the faultof politicians, after all, that you can't make
a decision, that you don't know the difference
about those policy differences, that you would like
damp and you're covered in cat hair.The best thing about being an undecided
voter in America is that you can make a
career of it. Manufacturing jobs can get a
wounded, broken can go under, but the supply
of elections never dries up. Two days after
the 44th president of the United States takes
the oath of office, Rudy Giuliani will pull
into New Hampshire on a dogged carrying
a banner that reads, "I 89d! I 89ed! I 89ed!
on 9/11." Democracy is the last growth
industry in the United States, other than the
military, and engineering. And guess what?
But I go into my new career with eyes agedbored specific ideas on how to solve the eco-
nomic crisis. When a politician reveals his
specific ideas on how to solve the economic
crisis, I will respond by saying, "I do not hear
any specific ideas on how to solve the eco-
nomic crisis." Personally, this will make the
cable news channels more interested in talk-
ing to me. It will also make James Carville's
head explode.So, be undecided not only in terms of
election but also in every other aspect of life.
My decision will transcend party politics.
Am I ready to be interviewed? Not at all!
Would I like to have superpowers? I'll get a
some things. Do I want a sword? I'll stroke
that thoughtfully. My goal is a mind that is
entirely unresolvable.We are modern-day Hamlets, stroking our
chins. In us, ignorance is noble, tragic even.I know that Undecided Voter is an increas-
ingly popular career choice in the U.S., es-
pecially in Blue Belt states where unemployment
is rising and the polls are always right.
(Granted, being an undecided voter pays
less well than a factory job, but you have to
remember that Americans can actually live
on fumes. It nourishes them.)I will need to stand out from the crowd.
That's why I've developed the four-point strategy
for becoming the most famous undecided
voter in America by the 2012 election.1. Be more undecided than any other
voter. It's one thing to be so intellectually
barren that you cannot formulate a prefer-
ence between two very different choices. All
undecided voters are that dumb. But I will
be even dumber. I will embody the chaotic
flicker of chaotic indecision that is wholly
unpredictable to logic and common sense. I will
tell the cable news reporter that I want to3. Hunt and have. Doing just one of the
two is not enough.4. Get a catchy nickname. If there's one
thing we've all learned about the whole Jon
the Plumber thing, it's that we're all sick of
it actually saying the words "Jon the Plumber."
Because that's fun. Look for me under the
name Dave the Ambulance Wailer.If all else fails, I will fall back on my secret
advantage as a Canadian citizen. I am not
legally permitted to cast a ballot in any Amer-
ican election. Unlike other undecided voters,
therefore, I am free to remain my undecided
ness up to and beyond election day. I will be
The Last Undecided Voter in the United States.
And I believe it makes me noble. (stroke
this thoughtfully.) ■ON THE WEB: To read Feschuk on the forums
and his blog, www.macleans.ca/feschuk

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